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Confusion Worse Confounded

K.S. Khosla

Like the Arab nations, the Akalis too have proved one again by their game of accusations and counter-accusations, expulsions and counter-expulsions that religion cannot be a binding or uniting force. Iran-Iraq war is probably nine years old but factionalism in the Akali Dal has been there since its inception more than six decades ago. The Akali Dal and the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee are so disunited now that even an ordinary Sikh gets confused. The Akali leaders, it seems, are worried more about self and pelf than the interests of the community at large which is facing the gravest crisis of its history.

Prof. Darshan Singh, when he was appointed acting chief of the Akal Takht, ordained all factions of the Akali Dal to unite and asked all party leaders to appear before the Akal Takht. A unity of sorts was achieved and the party was given the new name of United Akali Dal. But Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, former Chief Minister, refused to go to the Akal Takht on a matter of principle and as a result he was excommunicated from the panth. After some time Mr. Parkash Singh Badal and Mr. Sukhjinder Singh were released. Again, unity efforts were made and the party came to be known as the Unified Akali Dal. Mr. Barnala still preferred to remain out. Things have come to such a pass that even this Unified Akali Dal is divided into four groups, Badal group, Tohra group, Amrinder group and

Baba Joginder Singh group. All this proves that the claim of the Akalis that the panth is in danger is hollow. What is in danger is their 'kursi'.

Dismissals

Ever since May 30 when SGPC executive decided to dismiss Mr. Jasbir Singh Rode, the Akal Takht chief and other high priests, it was obvious that the extremists led by Baba Joginder Singh, father of Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale, would not take matters lying down. About a dozen leaders owing allegiance to Baba Joginder Singh met at Alamgir, near Ludhiana, on June 26 and expelled Mr. Shaminder Singh, M.P., Mr. Manjit Singh Calcutta, general secretary of the United Akali Dal and five mem-

bers of SGPC executive who had signed the resolution removing Mr. Rode and other priests from the high office on charges of violating the traditions of the Golden Temple and working at the behest of the government. The Alamgir meeting appointed Mr. Harcharan Singh Rode, son of the Baba, as the new general secretary of UAD. The meeting accused all the seven leaders of being government agents. This game of accusing the rivals of being government agents has a familiar ring about it.

One thing has, however, become clear. Baba Joginder Singh and his clan is gradually being isolated and there is much truth in the charge that the Baba wants his family to dominate UAD and SGPC. In fact, the Baba had been trying since long

for such dominance and the Alamgir meeting has only resulted in a formal split of UAD and SGPC and also formalised division between the moderates and the extremists (as opposed to the Khalistanis who owe allegiance to the Panthic Committee).

It is claimed that only nine members of the party presidium and council attended the meeting. In all there are 18 members. Six members are in jail and the three others abstained. The expelled members claimed that not even two members of the council were present. They accused Baba Joginder Singh of exploiting the name of Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale and perpetuating family rule over the two historic institutions of the Sikhs.

They also said that persons who were not even primary members of the Akali Dal, formed after many sacrifices made by the Sikhs in the twenties, had no right to expel them. The expelled members are supporters of Mr. Badal and Mr. G.S. Tohra, who are in jail.

The Split

One good result of this split is the increasing isolation of the Baba group. UAD leaders like Mr. Amrinder Singh and Mr. Jagdev Singh Talwandi, stayed away from the meeting. Even Mr. Joginder Singh Mann, father of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, president of UAD, who was present at the Alamgir meet has now dissociated himself from the meet-

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Aurangabad Roils An Analytical Review

Asghar Ali Engineer

In order to understand communal violence in Poona, Aurangabad etc. one has to understand the way the Shiv Sena is aggressively trying to penetrate in the interior of Maharashtra and planning to capture municipalities, gram panchayats etc. Mr. Bal Thackeray has been saying if there can be an ADMK Chief Minister in Tamil Nadu and Telugu Desam Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh, why not a Shiv Sena Chief Minister in Maharashtra? The Maharashtra's regional identity too must strongly and aggressively assert itself.

However, empirical reality does not very easily fit into an ideological mode. Had it been so, Hitlers and Bal Thackerays would have been ruling the world. So the Shiv Sena has to find other more amenable means to capture power. It is so as Maharashtra, unlike the southern states, does not feel its identity threatened vis-a-vis the states of the north, at least not so strongly. The regional identity alone thus cannot help Shiv Sena achieve its ambition of

having a Shiv Chief Minister in Maharashtra.

In fact the regional chauvinism against the south worked for a while in Bombay. Soon Mr. Thackeray discovered that his anti-south campaign in Bombay had lost its edge. In fact he

sulked in isolation for quite some time since the mid-seventies. Some political commentators had even written him off as a spent force. Mr. Thackeray, however, was looking for an opportunity to assert his importance once again

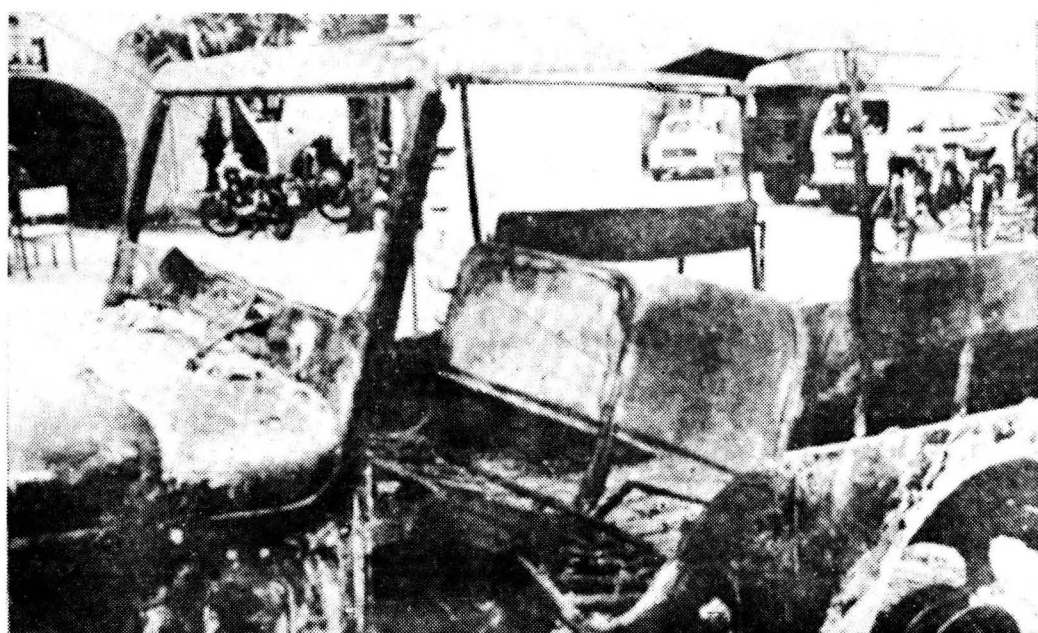
Revivalist Movement

He got this opportunity when Hindu revivalist movement began to emerge in the early eighties after

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Cartoons of the Fortnight



THE
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NEWSHOUND



By Rap



Sound and Furry

We can claim that we have spent money from our pockets (for elections). But that does not apply to other parties.

- Ghulam Nabi Azad, AICC(I) General Secretary, arguing that the Congress (I) can have access to big money because it has ruled for 40 years.

If you give me your word you will support the Congress(I), I will give you my blessing.

- Arun Govil, film and TV star, to the electorate in Allahabad.

If necessary, bulldozers will be pressed into service—both political as well as diesel-operated bulldozers.

- Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister on the Government's determination to create a corridor around the Golden Temple.

It is like a bulldozer running down hill and no one can check it.

- Subash Ghising, GNLF chief, on his forthcoming "do or die" agitation

We have an elected mandate. There is no need for either resignation or mid-term polls

- Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

We want an alternative to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and not a substitute

- Mr. Chandra Shekhar.

Any decent person is an alternative to Rajiv Gandhi

- Mr. Ajit Singh.

The Central Cabinet has been allowed to become a waste basket for Bhajan Lals, Dubays and Bir Bahadurs.

- Mr. L.K. Advani

I am glad to say that I am leaving the State (of Uttar Pradesh) almost problem free

- Mr. Bir Bahadur Singh

Why should I resign? The ruling party had suffered reverses in the past too, but did the former Chief Minister ever offer to resign?

- Mr. Amarsinh Chaudhary, Gujarat Chief Minister.

A lot of hard work. Very little time to think. Interesting, satisfying, challenging and sometimes frustrating

- Mr. Rajiv Gandhi about his job.

The Shankaracharya of Puri should commit sati.

- Acharya Rajneesh.

Bofors is a good gun. But then if you are against Mr. Rajiv Gandhi you will say that the French Sofma is better. If you are with him naturally, Bofors is the best. If you don't like both sides, those for and against him then the Austrian gun becomes the best.

- Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.

My life is in danger if I accept the hill council.

- Subhas Ghising quoted in The Sunday Observer

By his on-again, off-again approach he (Ghising) has confused the Darjeeling issue to such an extent that no solution to the problem is in sight.

- Editorial in The Telegraph.

I act as and when situations arise. I am not a manipulating politician.

- H.D. Deve Gowda, Karnataka Janata dissident leader, in The Times of India

THE FORUM GAZETTE

THE OPPOSITION SCENE

Akali Factionalism

Continued from page 1

The Opposition scene is baffling, to put it no more strongly. While the victory at Allahabad has made it amply clear that the ruling party is on the defensive, one cannot say with equal certainty that the Opposition is on the ascendent. This is because the Opposition is divided.

Divided it is bound to be. On the extreme left there are parties like the CPI and the CPM. On the extreme right we have parties like the BJP, the Shiv Sena and the Majlis-e-Mashawart. In the middle are parties like the Janata, the Lok Dal (both the varieties) and a couple of others. Then there are regional parties like the Telugu Desam and so on. It is a hotch-potch, if one may venture to say.

Parties on the Left and the Right are not likely to come together under any circumstances. They are both ideologically oriented and are so hostile to each other that to expect them to come together on one common platform is not realistic. Were they to do so, the very cause of their existence would more or less disappear. Consequently they are bound to plough their lonely furrow, in a manner of speaking. The Left had some accession of strength when it was able to form the government in Kerala but then it lost the government in Tripura. Altogether the situation continues to be of going it alone rather than working in conjunction with others.

At the same time however, VP Singh is right in saying that to talk only about an alternative and not about a programme is unwise and counter productive. What of the Left parties in the situation? They do count, however only in respect of certain areas and certain issues. The accent on working out an alternative programme is therefore a move in the right direction. Only once the programme has been worked out it would become possible to talk turkey to them. Till then it would be bisting in the dark and while some part of it is unavoidable, it need not be indulged in more than what is absolutely necessary.

This is only a saying that while working out a programme and in particular while bringing the BJP into a united front the next round of discussions should not be lost sight of. Some accommodation with the Left would have to be made. As far as one can judge, their main focus is on cooperation with the USSR and the defence of the public sector as it stands today. Both are thorny issues and it would be difficult to say that a compromise can be worked out easily. But then let there be a difference in regard to issues rather in regard to individuals.

But from this there is no getting away that the BJP is an important factor in all Hindi speaking states. To by-pass the BJP will not work, while the BJP does have a closed mind in regard to certain things, by the large it is capable of interaction with other parties and there is not all that much of a difference of approach as far as the rest of the issues are concerned. Tactically speaking, VP Singh took one or two false steps in Allahabad but it is time to work out a new kind of understanding. How precisely that is to be done is a matter that requires to be dealt with separately.

While strong in certain regions, the Left does not have much of a presence in the Hindi heart-land. There it is either the Janata or the Lok Dal. Even Janata is a marginal force in the Hindi speaking belt. It is either the Lok Dal or some others which are difficult to categorise. Also there are local groups which wield influence. The main significance of VP Singh's victory at Allahabad lies in this that he has uncovered a long stream of discontent against the ruling party. Not only that, he was able to forge a united front against it. One thing that is indisputably clear in the situation then is that, were there to be a united front against the ruling party, it would carry everything before it.

In a sense therefore, what matters in the Hindi speaking belt is how the Lok Dals behave, to what extent there is collaboration with the BJP and if the anti-Congress vote as symbolised by the Jan Morcha and others can be brought into this aggregate. Put another way, the Left is not particularly relevant here. The task is how to bring the non-left forces together on a common platform and make them function as one.

Mere the ambitions of petty politicians come in. One does not have to comment about the role of Chandrashekhar and a few other vain and manipulative individuals. They are not going to play the game and there is no way to deal with them except to by-pass them. This is precisely what VP Singh means when he says that what is important is a programme and not the individuals. He is right but not entirely so.

Individuals do matter. The voter does wish to know for which individual he is voting as the likely Prime Minister. Whatever one may say, whether it is India or any other country, the charisma of the individual does count. And the Opposition is singularly weak in this regard.

is not to suggest that the ruling party is any stronger. The charisma of the PM has more or less worn away and what we see now is nothing but tinsel. In this situation an alternative can emerge and should emerge. Whether it does so or not is another question.

VP Singh has taken the position that he is not available for public office, this makes things difficult no doubt. For all we know, one may therefore eventually get saddled with one of those few odd individuals whose ambition is unlimited and whose Political ethics are questionable. The whole picture is confused and that is why one needs to be a little more down to earth than what one has been so far.

While the emergence of a consensus candidate as an alternative to the PM is important, it is by no means the only issue. VP Singh is right that let us work out a programme of action. According to press reports,

ing. He said that he did not know when and how the resolving expelling seven leaders was taken. He added that the Baba family must make sacrifices to bring about unity in UAD.

Assertion of authority on the part of SGPC, however belated, in removing the high priests, who were once accused by the government of being Khalistanis and helping terrorists, so to be welcomed. Once the Golden Temple was cleaned of terrorists, the SGPC executive dismissed the priests. The government should see nothing wrong with this move. On the contrary, the

government tried to pressurise the executive to withdraw the resolution sacking the priests and thereby exposed itself to the criticism that it was helping some of the militant outfits. The charge against the SGPC that it acted late is true but it never too late to mend. The SGPC did not bend even after some of its leaders were arrested, though released later.

This attitude of the government in ignoring and debunking the moderates is not going to pay it and is fraught with dangerous consequences. At least Mr. Badal and his supporters want to

remain in the national mainstream but that cannot be said of the extremists. The government should decide which horse it wants to back in Punjab.

About unity among Akalis, reports have appeared of Mr. Badal and Mr. Barnala coming together, now that the Baba family is being isolated. No doubt with the Badal group taking a stand against Baba Joginder Singh, Mr. Barnala's stand has been vindicated but the chances of unity seem to dim as the differences between the two leaders are personal and political, (July 1, 1988)

Bullets for Legal Rights

SHARECROPPERS GOT BULLETS WHEN THEY DEMANDED THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS - REPORT FROM A VILLAGE IN BHAGALPUR DISTRICT, BIHAR.

By Mukul

Kiridaand is a typical backward village located about 35 to 40 Kms away from the headquarters of Bhagalpur district, in Bihar. There are about 150 families in this village. Most of them are landless farm labourers and sharecroppers. No big landowner lives in this village.

For the last one year or so there has been a lot of tension in this village. The sharecroppers of this village are fighting for their legal rights, and facing the combined gang-up of the landlord and his goons backed by the police and the administration. These families most of who have been working as sharecroppers for 15 to 20 years are asking only for the proper recording of their sharecropping rights and for stopping their illegal eviction from this land. The landlord family seems to be bent on evicting the sharecroppers.

The landlord family owns a big trading concern in Ghogha Bazar, nearly 8 Kms. from Khiridaand. This family has nearly 200 acres of land just near Khiridaand.

For the last few years the landlord family has been selling this land in bits and parts, and in the process nearly 25 sharecroppers have already been evicted.

Kisan Sabha

The sharecroppers have organised themselves under a Kisan Sabha (Peasants' union) to protest against this eviction

and to press for their recording of their sharecropping rights. According to their leader Bilas Mandal several meetings were organised in the village. Several of them have filed legal cases to protect their rights over nearly 60 acres of land. But the administration has not taken any substantial

Implicating Villagers

After this the police tried to implicate the villagers in false cases and arrest them. It was alleged that the villagers had tried to loot the landlord's crop and had attacked the Police injuring two constables. But the road on which the alleged incident of looting of grain is supposed to have taken place is far away from the scene of Police firing, and despite our persistent inquiries the Police could not tell us the name of the injured constables.

In March-April another wave of tension spread in this area. The harvesting of the crop by the sharecroppers was arbitrarily stopped by the police. But the trial steps on their complaints and demands.

40 year old Khero Devi told us that last year on the morning of December 5 armed police came to the village to arrest their leader Bilas Mandal. The village women surrounded their leader and did not allow the police to arrest their leader without any warrant. They beat up the women with rifle butts, but still the women faced

them bravely. The police had to go away without arresting their leader - because of the firm display of unity by them.

According to Khero Devi, Pachiya Devi and Nakul Mandal, after about 2 hours a bigger contingent of armed police reached their village. Villagers again faced them with courage. The Police and some anti-social elements who had also come there fired on the unarmed women.

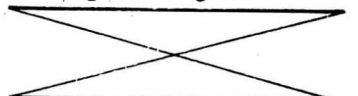
In this firing 55 year old Matiya Devi, 30 year old Suchita Devi (mother of two children) and newly married, 22 year old Geeta Devi were killed. Khero Devi and Pachiya Devi were also hit by bullets and had to be admitted to a hospital.

18 years old Nakul Mandal was also hit by a bullet. Several other women Meera Devi, Rajni Devi, Kalpatva Devi, Kokoya Devi and Lavi Mosmat were also injured. But this time also the police had to return empty-handed.

same police gave permission for harvesting to the landlord and his men. They were deprived of their legal share of the crop.

As the struggle of the sharecroppers has intensified a not unrelated development has been the effort to create communal tension in a neighbouring village. The Kisan Sabha has held meeting to check the spread of this communalism.

People of Khiridaand and neighbouring villages have held a demonstration in Bhagalpur before the District Magistrate's office. Apart from demanding compensation for the families of the dead and injured villagers and an impartial inquiry into this incident, their main demand remains that of the recording of their legal land rights.



Aurangabad Riots

Continued from page 1

the episode of conversion to Islam of some Harijans in Mee-nakshipuram district of Tamil Nadu. Mrs. Gandhi too, who had begun to cultivate Hindu votes in the post-emergency period, exploited this even politically and lent subtle support to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Mrs. Gandhi of course was not a leader of a communal outfit but only shrewdly exploited Hindu sentiments for her ballot-box victory.

However the Shiv Sena and its supremo had strong communal orientation right from the beginning. Shiv Sena had played a significant role in the Kosa and Bhiwandi riots in the late sixties and the early seventies. Only at times was its anti-Muslim tirade overshadowed by its anti-south tirade. Now of course it has been unabashedly indulging in anti-Muslim tirade. No more anti-south outbursts.

The Sena's communal rebirth took place around the mid-eighties, 1984 to be precise. After sulking in isolation for a long time, it decided to champion the Hindu cause. It tried to create a united Hindu front in a meeting at Chowpatty in April, 1984. This meeting was followed by riots from Bombay to Bhiwandi, the highly industrialised belt of the country, in May 1984. It was an absolute havoc for the minorities. Swords in hand, the Shiv Sainiks were roaming the streets of Bombay. Thane and Bhiwandi with of course, the police looking on helplessly.

Shiv Sena Strategy

The same strategy the Sena adopted for penetrating the interior of Maharashtra. Its ambitions soared high especially after it captured the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1985. Wherever the Sena tried to get entry it did so by causing communal conflagration. Thus a series of riots took place in Panvel, Nasik, Amravati, Aurangabad, Nanded etc. Wherever it opened its branch, communal violence followed. The Sena presently had its sights on municipalities and gram panchayats. It tried the same thing in Aurangabad Municipal Corporation elections. Here it is also necessary to understand the demographic and other changes which have been taking place in Aurangabad to understand the genesis of the riots. The Marathwada was earlier a part of the old Nizam state. It was naturally ruled by the Muslim elite with a section of the Hindu elite with the Muslim elite playing the dominant part. However the understanding between the two elites had helped maintain the precarious communal balance which of course began to be upset with the Razakar Tehrik on the eve of the partition. The Hindu resentment of the

Muslim domination began to come to surface.

However, much worse began to happen with the social and demographic changes which began to take place with the development schemes in Aurangabad during the sixties. Its first manifestation came with the riots of 1968. One must understand that with economic development power shifts occur and this shift causes, as is quite natural, lot of friction which often manifests itself in the caste and communal form. Since the early sixties Aurangabad has been undergoing rapid transformation bringing about a shift in the balance of power. The Muslim population has been reduced from 45% to about 30% in the district. Industrialisation has brought non-Muslim outsiders to the town. It is interesting to note that in the case of Bhiwandi, Malegaon etc., the Muslim population has increased due to emigration of weavers from U.P. which in turn has created the communal problem. In case of Aurangabad it is just the reverse. Here the Muslim population has gone down in number as well as in significance which partly causes the communal problem.

Feudal Class

During the Nizam period, it was the Muslim feudal class which ruled. Now with the growth of industrialisation in Aurangabad it is the Hindu businessmen and industrialists who enjoy power. Most of these industrialists and businessmen have come from outside. The Muslims have been reduced to penury for two reasons: firstly, they could not economically adjust to the commercial and industrial economy and they remain grounded in the feudal economy. Secondly, they could not get proportionate employment in the new business and industrial setups. Even the non-Muslim locals are not getting adequate employment in these new ventures. The share of the locals in new jobs is said to be around 4%. The local Muslims are even worse off.

A section of Muslims naturally took to anti-social activities which created a stereotype in the minds of the Hindus. In the minds of the average Hindu, a Muslim in Aurangabad is equated with a 'goonda', an 'anti-social'. It is interesting to note that, in a CIDCO constituency, a CPI candidate who had for years worked for the workers lost election to an unknown Sena candidate. When some workers in the area were questioned as to why they did not vote for Comrade Dr. Bhalchandra Kango who served them so long, they reacted sharply and said, "Anyone can get us more wages and D.A. but only the Shiv Sena can save us from the 'Muslim Goondas'."

Even the industrial workers have been made to think like that. What about others? It must make us sit and think seriously.

The Muslims are on the periphery of the economy. Even the 11% Mahars in the town are educationally and employment wise better off. Most of the Muslims are either rickshaw drivers (90% of the rickshaws in the town are driven by Muslims), coolies, vendors, cycle and stove repairers and peons in the offices. There are hardly any Muslims in higher posts. There are none in business, let alone in industries, in any substantial numbers.

The Gulf

In contrast to this, their leaders are quite well off either due to some business or criminal activity. This contrast is very sharp and is felt by the poor Muslims. Some of the leaders are notorious criminals. They have political ties. Javed Hasan is alleged to be a 'matka king' and is a supporter of the Congress-I. He is brother of the Muslim League leader Mr. Taqui Hasan who was elected as deputy mayor with the support of the Congress-I. Mr. Javed Hasan Khan was denied ticket this time and hence he contested independently and won with a handsome margin. He defeated the Congress-I candidate who was a dalit.

One must also take into account the fact that the population of Aurangabad has greatly increased. Today it has more than five lakhs. The outsiders have captured business and industries (specially those from Western Maharashtra) as well as jobs. The local's share in these, according to Mr. Govind Shroff, a noted Gandhian leader, is not more than 2%. The increased urbanisation has also meant increased crime (Muslims having larger share in this sphere) and close nexus between it and politics. Gang rivalries play their own part.

The Shiv Sena registered its entry into the town in 1985 in its characteristic style by pushing up communal tension. Then there was limited communal strife in 1986 when riots broke out in different parts of Marathwada. Also, the Sena was determined to increase its influence during the municipal corporation elections, if not also capture it. This time the Sena aim was limited but it was totally surprised by the results. It gave it a tremendous boost. It had fielded non-entities, mostly the youth. It is important to note that the unemployed youth is greatly attracted by those organisations which provide them opportunities both for action and leadership. This is what the Sena is doing. Most of the communal organisations are making use of this fact, be they the extremists in Punjab or the

senas like the Hindu Sena, Adam Sena, Bajrangbali Sena or Ali Sena. The Shiv Sena's overwhelming membership comprises the unemployed youth.

One also has to take into account the cross sections of the castes who contested on the Sena's tickets. Many of them were Bhangis, Matangs, Kumbhars, Malis and Chamars and others among whom many are rickshaw drivers, vegetable vendors, basket-makers etc. who can hardly spend anything of their own on the election campaign. There were, among its candidates only three Marathas and two Brahmins. However, there were no Mahars among their candidates. Mahars fought separately under the leadership of Prakash Ambedkar.

Shiv Sena Candidates

It is interesting to study the list of Shiv Sena candidates. Why did it give tickets to such low caste candidates as Matangs, Chamars, Kalals, Bhangis etc.? Probably it wanted to convince 'Hindus' in general that it is their champion, not only of the upper and middle class caste Hindus. Also, no established political party gives any importance to these low castes. The Shiv Sena would not have anyway got much support from the upper caste leaders who have already carved out their niches. Thus by giving tickets to these low castes, the Sena achieved two purposes; it drew new blood for its party and also appeared as a champion of low-caste Hindus. In future it would prove fruitful to study the caste composition of the Shiv Sena candidates for the Aurangabad Municipal Corporation elections.

The Sena used militant Hindu ideology for winning the municipal elections. There were several reasons for this. It definitely wants to carve Hindu constituency for itself. It can hardly compete in secular issues with other established secular parties. Also, in terms of Hindu militancy it had to compete with established communal parties like the BJP, the RSS etc. Without its unrestrained Hindu militancy, why should people prefer it over others. The expression of Hindu militancy by the Shiv Sena was so unrestrained that the president of the BJP, Shri L K Advani, was compelled to express his disapproval of it.

Caste Factor

Also, there was another equally compelling reason for it: the Sena's candidates were mostly of low caste origin. How could they win legitimisation in the eyes of the Hindus except through the use of militant Hindu idiom? Lastly, it must be said that this is the game now being played by all the parties, secular or communal. The elections are now lost or won on caste and communal considerations, not on

people's issues. And those with a criminal background can do it much more openly and unscrupulously. That is why both the Shiv Sena and Muslim League which had set up many candidates with criminal background resorted to it so freely.

Communal Propaganda

As the whole election campaign was based on communal propaganda and vote-bank concept, there was bound to be communal tension. Bal Thackeray had openly thundered that the Congress had converted Aurangabad into a Muslim vote bank) the Congress had given tickets to 22 Muslims out of 60 seats which in fact was roughly in proportion to their voting percentage which is roughly 38%. Also, the present MLA is a Muslim, Mr. Motiwala) and that he would convert it into a Hindu vote bank. The tempers were frayed by such blatant and unabashed propaganda. On the other side of the fence, Muslim League too was appealing to the Muslims to vote for it on the ground of religion. In fact a leaflet is said to have been distributed in the name of its leader, a Muslim, in appealing to all Muslims of Aurangabad to vote only for Muslim candidates, whatever party they belong to. The Shiv Sena made maximum possible use of these leaflets. It got it translated into Marathi and distributed it among the Hindus saying that like Muslims they should also vote only for those representing Hindu interests i.e. the Sena candidates. The Marathi translation of the pamphlet was also published in Marmik, the Sena mouthpiece.

However, Mr. Shahbaz Rafiq of Aurangabad Times expressed his doubts about the genuineness of the pamphlet on two grounds; there is no such organisation in Aurangabad as Ittehadul Muslimin in whose name the pamphlet was issued. Secondly, the pamphlet did not carry the name of any Muslim leader on it which makes its authenticity suspicious. Whatever the truth, it did create a lot of hot air and polarised the voting on communal lines.

Then there came the victory rally by the Sena on 10th May which was addressed by its chief, Bal Thackeray. They rally was attended by more than twenty thousand people, according to intelligence reports others claim even greater attendance, 50,000 for instance Mr. Thackeray is reported to have said in his speech that the Congress had turned Aurangabad into a Muslim vote Bank. I have quite a provocative speech. However, what was worse, the sense of jubilation was soon turned into a sense of frustration for the Sainiks as the Congress, the Muslim League and the Dalits (i.e. Ambedkarites) joined hands to elect a Congress mayor and a Muslim League deputy mayor.

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Sikh Militancy Myth and Reality

Political Degradation, Religion and Politics

Maj. Gen. Joginder Singh (Retd)

Before we jump to any conclusions it is necessary to carry out a brief appreciation of the past events and the current situation in INDIA, with particular emphasis on Punjab in which sikhs are involved in a peculiar way, as part of National degeneration. It is also essential to suggest to the Sikh Community to adopt a course of action by deciding priorities for the rejuvenation of the community.

In February, 1984, I wrote a letter to the "Tribune" after SIKHS were attacked in an organised manner abetted by the then Haryana Govt; obviously under directions from New Delhi. This was apparently in retaliation to the massacre of some Hindus in a Bus near Dhillwan in Punjab and some other places. This letter was not published by the Tribune, without any reasons; I give below the gist of the that letter.

Firstly, I emphasized the fact that these killings of Hindus were being done by active participation of Pakistan: Agents dressed as Sikhs along with local collaborators who were getting a reward for killing each person.

Secondly, that the Haryana Govt had started this unworthy action willingly or unwilling at Panipat against an entire community where ladies were stripped of their clothes, respectable travellers and local sikhs were roughly handled and molested, the main Gurudwara were burnt and holy books were burnt. I reminded the people that India had never won a single battle at Panipat. This was an un-called for and unnecessary action to touch a hornets nest.

Thirdly, if the Prime Minister encouraged such wild acts, she may have to abdicate one day.

And lastly, I suggested that to control and stabilise the situation, Field Marshall S.H.F.J. Menekshaw should be brought as a common Governor of both the States of Haryana & Punjab as he was a non-political person commanding confidence of this region. I leave it to the readers whether my suggestions were relevant to the situation or not, at that crucial period.

The Sikh Militancy

In order to study the present Sikh Militancy, it is essential to review briefly the overall developments of events in the history of India from the 7th Century AD, with the death of King Harsha, when decay had set in

Hindu India and the crescent appeared on the horizon. As Islam came, it conquered India, settled and subdued its degenerated population with a ruthless sword. This period of approximately one thousand years, is mainly a record of anarchy, confusion, selfishness, cowardice, treachery, horrible reigns of terror and the agony of the weak.

This gloomy period was however, relieved with the birth of a new religion called "Sikhism", under the inspired teachings of Guru Nanak Born in 1469 AD. During this period, the Sikh Scriptures were compiled, 5th guru was tortured on death by Jahangir, 6th Guru started arming the peasants and fought four battles which he won. Then came the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Delhi. This new religion grew into a militant nation under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh (in 1699 AD), which brought in its wake a new system, ethics, unity, cohesion of action and unparalleled sacrifices. The history of about 100-years between the death of Guru Gobind Singh and Maharaja Ranjit's occupation of Punjab is a very trying period and requires a lot of space to describe it. The invasions of Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali are especially important.

Throughout this period, historical processes developed from one stage to another, and kept an upward trend so long as the ethics of the religion were strictly followed. The defeat of the powerful Sikh army by the British was a natural and direct result of ignoring these ethics, and the treachery of the type which had brought ruin to Hindu India earlier.

The British period in Punjab initially disheartened the Sikhs, but eventually helped to bring back the lost glory - by the end of the last Century Arya Samaj came into prominence in Punjab and tried to convert certain Sikhs back into Hinduism. Lots of people did relinquish their Sikh religion which they had embraced for financial and other gains during Ranjit Singh's time. To counter this, Chief Khalsa Dewan came into prominence to protect the religion and to develop education, Tat Khalsa also came up to protect the religion only. The Sikh historical Shrines were being managed by hereditary Mahants who were usurping offerings and other incomes. As a result of this movement three things emerged:-

- i) An insistence upon the permanent authority of the Guru.
- ii) A sustained campaign to secure Khalsa Control over historic Gurudwaras.
- iii) Enforcement of Sikh code of discipline.

This consisted of Akali agitation, sending Akali Jathas first to Nankana Sahib and later at other places. They suffered heavy casualties but kept it non-violent. It culminated in the enactment of the Gurdwara Act, in 1925.

This stage set an example to rest of India of sacrifice for a cause through non-violent methods.

With the departure of British from India, it is a Saga of betrayals, by the political leaders of independent India. The basic Sikh fear is, that unless they continue to fight for their rights, and they refuse to bow before the majority, in spite of state atrocities, they may be absorbed by the Hindu society.

The Hindu population of Punjab was not expected to co-operate as it is primarily a trading class and has other influences and interests which make them adopt a negative attitude towards sikh demands. Things like disowning Punjabi Language, constant anti-sikh propaganda by vernacular press and even efforts to convert poor and scheduled class Sikhs into Hinduism, are further reinforced by the recent statement of R.S.S. leader Mr. Deoras, who thinks Sikhs, Muslims and Christians or in other words anybody who is living in India is a Hindu. Shiv Sena leaders recent statements also are pointers in this direction.

Current National Scene :

The current problems facing Govt. of India in various states, particularly in the border areas, especially in Punjab are primarily the results of its own ugly policies and practices. Lack of Statesmanship, gradual destruction of democratic institutions, and giving a stepmotherly treatment to some of the states, proves the bankruptcy of a long term national vision. Political leaders refuse to learn from history and are even indulging in narrow political manoeuvring, and intrigue is part of Indian blood now. Selfish and greedy political leaders are trying to hold three things at the same time; namely power or Chair, Topi or Turban and ever bulging pocket or purse bag, with only

two hands. Thus a corrupt and selfish political culture without accountability has emerged, which has engulfed the nation, and Sikhs are very much a part of it. The dissidents from Con-
Religion-Politics

Sikhism being a relatively young religion still has fair amount of original faith, spirit and pride. These three gave a special strength in the distant past. That is how Moghuls were uprooted, invasions from the west were stopped, and how our Gurus and later thousand of Sikhs were massacred. How Sikhs created a name of value, and a Special Sikh code of conduct by retrieving and restoring young women and children by attaching the retiring invading armies on their way back to Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia is history. This was all possible, so long, Sikhs had stuck to faith, pride of achievement based on the spirit infused by the Guru and regard for the Sikh scriptures and the use of sacred offerings as per Guru's laid down directions.

This very spirit and brotherhood has been so badly

influenced by the national corrupt political culture that it has become a disease - a chronic disease in fact. Most Sikh politicians in the country including their supporter Jathedars are part of it. Khalsa mind has been badly polluted and Sikh panth is sliding down into a bottomless pit. Misdeeds of successive Governments at the Centre and particularly in Punjab - two last Congress Chief Ministers in Punjab - are the main cause of the present state by creating deliberate confusion and planned sabotage. The Akali Govts. are to be bailed for non-performance. The creation of rift in Akali party by the creation of Tat Khalsa and using Sant Bhinderanwale as a convenient personality ending up in 'Blue Star', 'Wood rose' and consequent killing of Indira Gandhi, the Nov. 1984 riots are well known events and there is no need to repeat - The Sikhs of Bombay paid 'Jazia' to Shiv Sena and thus an Aurangzeb type atmosphere prevailed and similar threats are being issued again.

Continued on page 12



Water-Starved Cities of Rajasthan

Jodhpur, the second largest city of Rajasthan has experienced such severe shortage of water that for several months water had to be brought by one or more trains to moisten parched throats of the city's population.

In Barmer town as water in several other towns of Rajasthan water supply is officially rationed to once every alternative day, but indignant residents complain that they frequently get water only once in four days or so.

In Udaipur, described in tourist brochures as the city of lakes, the water scarcity has become so desperate that a pipeline, costing Rs. 13 Cr. and involving a lift of around 250 ft. to bring water from Jaisamand lake, located about 70 kms away from the town, is being considered.

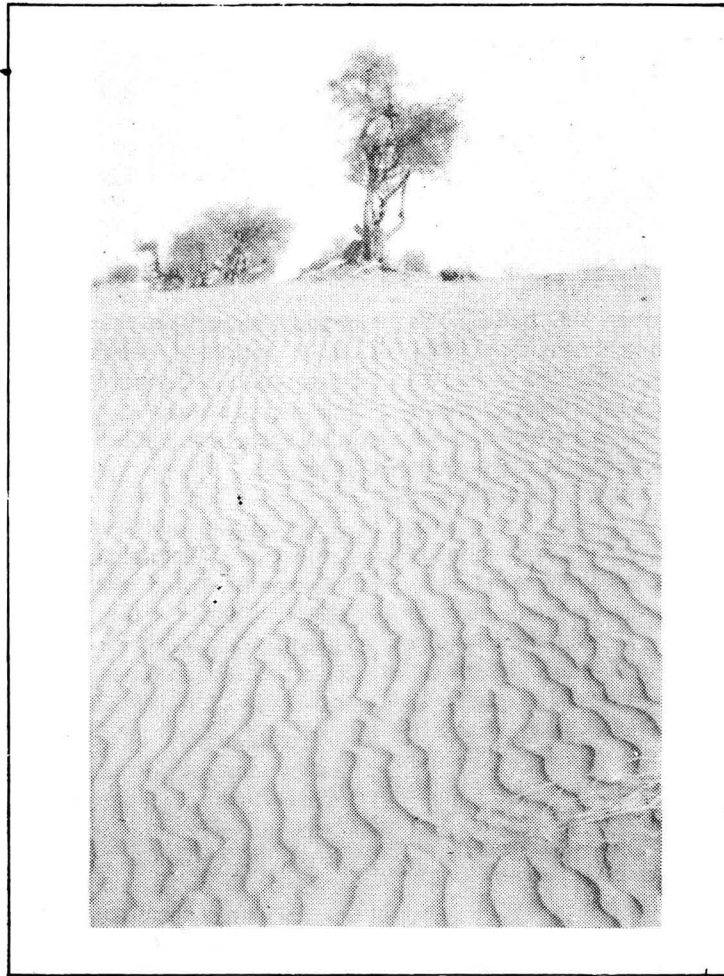
Almost all the cities and town of Rajasthan are facing a serious shortage of water, (with a few exceptions like Banswara), a shortage that grew to crises proportions this summer. When looking at the causes of this crisis, it is common to mention rain-failure on the major cause. But this is not an adequate explanation, as in the past such rain failures did not lead to such a serious water crisis in these cities and towns.

water from other sources as a result of various water supply schemes) led to the neglect of these catchments in recent years. The administration compounded this by allowing various housing schemes, other construction activities and even large-scale quarrying work at catchment, sites which would clearly hinder the collection of water in these lakes at the time of rains.

Government Involvement

Giving some specific examples this study points out that in Bikaner the government itself has been involved in the sale of catchment land in the name of development. The entire Pavan Puri Colony has come up on the catchment of Gharsisar tank. Plots of Murlidhar Vyas Nagar have been carried out of the catchment of phoolsagar lake. Catchment of Sansolar Tank has also been leased out. Brick Kilns have been set up in the catchment of Kolayat tank. Side by side the trees and grasslands (sevan grass) in these catchments have also been destroyed.

In Jaipur a big settlement has come up in the catchment of Rajamal Ka Talab (tank). In Gadisar lake of Jaisalmer a tourist



A Bold Step

Fed up of chronic water shortages recently the residents of Bhim Ji Ka Mohalla, in Khanda Balsa area of Jodhpur city, decided to take a bold step - they agreed to contribute their voluntary labour to clear the big mounds of rubble over a traditional source of water - the bawari (stepped well) of Tapi - which had fallen into neglect over several years. They worked day and night and over 100 truck loads of rubble was carried away before they reached the water that had been buried under this rubble for decades.

While this work attracted a lot of attention at that time and in fact provided the impetus for similar effort at other traditional water sources in the city such as Noor Ji Ka Jhalra Chand Bawri and Jaalab Bawri, the joy of the people in Bhim Ji Ka Mohalla who started the entire thing has been short-lived. In fact when this reporter visited this settlement in April-end, he found the people dejected and again water-starved despite the great effort made by them to solve their water-shortage.

The reason, they said, was the shabby treatment they received at the hands of the water supply officials. When the officials came here first, they promised to keep their staff at the bawri for its proper maintenance. They promised to construct a bathing place for the women near the bawri where the water would be regularly supplied. They also promised to supply clean water to the residents of the mohalla on a priority basis.

The people complained bitterly, however, that none of the promises have been kept. In fact they alleged that from the point of view of water availability now they are even worse off than before as even the facility to women to have their bath here which was available earlier is not available now. No staff comes here and the maintenance of the bawri has been badly neglected, they alleged, and I could see evidence of all this as I climbed down the step of stairs to see the bawri from close. It is truly a wonderful creation of our ancestors and the mind boggles at the imagination of how much effort must have been put into it to make available assured water to people. People who live nearest to it and who have worked to clean and revive it, surely have a priority claim to this water source, and the way in which the officials have let down these people would clearly act as a dampener for other such voluntary efforts.

Seepage

While the neglect and mismanagement of traditional sources and practices has thus proved very costly, what have been the officials and engineers doing to tap new sources of water for the thirsty towns and cities of Rajasthan. In Jodhpur the channels bringing water from jawai dam have generally recorded very heavy seepage losses so there was a proposal to convert this into a pipeline. Then suddenly the more ambitious scheme of a lift canal from the Indira Gandhi canal Project came up and this idea was

Bharat Dogra

dropped. But as an engineer from Public Health and Engineering Dept. informed us, that lift irrigation canal project itself got indefinitely delayed due to the petty interference of politicians regarding which villages it should pass through, who should get the credit for bringing lift canal water to the villages and to Jodhpur, and other such issues.

The result people have neither been able to get the benefit of the first scheme nor of the second scheme.

Now as desperate efforts to get more water for Jodhpur city are being made, this engineer continued, a conflict with some farmers has also emerged who want to use a higher share for irrigation of their fields. Within the city, distribution of water supply poses problems, he said, as pressures from various places make it difficult to distribute the water on an optimum basis. And frequently power failures add further to this already full bag of woes.

Thus while it is true that water supply officials and engineers are forced to work in very difficult conditions, their own reputation has also been marred to some extent by several allegations of corrupt deals, specially those involving unnecessary or improper purchases.

The effort to provide adequate water to the towns and cities of Rajasthan has to be made at several levels - the foremost of which will be to restore their proper place to the time-honoured methods of collecting scarce rain water through carefully maintained and protected catchments. For this further hindrance of catchment water flow has to be prevented and encroachments that've already taken place should be removed to the extent it is possible and practical. It would be a good idea to involve senior citizens with good knowledge and experience of traditional water management methods in such efforts.



In a recent study on neglect of traditional water sources in Rajasthan a well-known journalist of Rajasthan, Mr. Om Prakash Thanvi, has pointed out that the more important reason why the

several lakes of Rajasthan, which supplied water to its cities and towns in the past, are empty or badly depleted today is their catchment areas have been neglected and indiscriminately encroached upon on a large scale. In the past people took particular care to keep the catchment areas of these lakes very clean and free of encroachments. At some places lakes exist at the higher places helped to recharge the water table for the wells existing below. This system preserved with great care helped to make water available even during years of very low rainfall.

The breakdown of the social structure responsible for such community maintenance of the

augurs (or catchments) of lakes or the temporary availability of resort, several encroachment in the catchment (including an airport) now preclude the proper filling up of the lake.

In Jodhpur particularly severe damage has been inflicted by the large scale quarrying work in the catchments. Several ditches and rubble accumulations created by indiscriminate quarrying work have badly hindered the free flow of water to the tanks and lakes of this water starved city. Surprisingly these quarry contractors have managed to get clearance certificates from the water supply department.

In Kota the neglect of several tanks which absorbed the rapid flow of rain water has inflicted another type of damage in recent years—it has resulted in disastrous floods from waters which would have otherwise been absorbed in the several tanks on the slopes.

Health in Housing

Rajni Singh

Has anyone been giving attention to a house as something more than a shelter? I am not referring to mottoes like "A house is not a home". The filial relations and ups and downs in the subliminate of the family apart, a house has to make a substantial contribution in the promotion and sustenance of the health of its inhabitants.

This idea is now, perhaps at too late a stage, getting the spotlight. For a quite long time it was assessment of housing needs, availability of land and building materials and finances and trying to narrow the gap between demand and supply of shelters. Giant housing sites sprawling over hundreds of acres and rising 20 or 30 storeys certainly did alter the housing scenario in the metropolitan cities. But, in the planning of these structures the greater attention was perhaps on the deadline, flow of funds and the capacity of the would-be allottee to repay in comfortable instalments.

The result is that we can see flats with outrageous misplacement of rooms, doors and windows, kitchen and toilets. Within the same plinth area, there could have been better arrangement ensuring a healthier orientation from the point of view of sunlight, wind-flow and cross-ventilation and comparative sizes of living sleeping, cooking and storage areas and even the verandah.

Basic Amenities

Access to basic services like clean drinking water and foolproof sanitary arrangements for disposal of waste are also related areas in housing and health. These measures will ensure protection against communicable diseases.

The position of a house in relation to its environment can contribute a lot in prevention of the onset of chronic disease and malignancies. Women and children are likely to be exposed more to health hazards as they spend more time in the house and face the deficiencies more. This is more significant in the case of the urban poor and displaced and migrant population.

There are cases where the house itself becomes a workplace. In the farm settings, the home becomes a store house for implements, chemicals and fertilisers and also a stable for livestock. Then there are artisans and people who run mini industries in their houses. Such people are more worried, about extra money that will be coming rather than the health hazard arising out of their converting part of their house into a work-place.

Spurts in population and tremendous pressures on living space generate such problems that convert the house itself into a potential health hazard. This problem combined with shortage of potable water and absence of sanitary waste disposal should now emerge as the prime consideration in the planning of a single house, a group housing colony of apartment cluster irrespective of income level of the beneficiaries.

There are some areas in the drawing up of a plan where the danger zones may be tangible only when the families move into the house. These create more occasions for injuries than illness. An unnecessary projecting wall, a lintel which may be too low, a floor which may be beautiful but slippery, a kitchen that is flashy but overcrowded, toilet that doesn't drain properly or has a wrong angle for the foot rests. And like what happens in most multi level structures, a staircase with a ridiculous ratio of rise and tread making people stumble and fall.

Change in Attitude

The way inhabitants use the house also has to be studied properly and necessary counsel given to the people how they can use the house and its fittings for a healthy living. This forms an area of health motivation and private decision about housing. There are also a number of public policy decisions like area development, green patches, common spaces for recreation, environment protection and community participation.

A lot can be achieved efficiently and quickly if only the beneficiaries were to understand the basic principle that needs are different from wants. What a neighbour has planned and executed in his house need not be imitated by others. They have to make the best of reconciliation possible between their essential health and living needs and their finances and forget completely about both ideas of what was good enough for their grandfather and also that they must keep up with the Joneses.

A lot of coordination has to be there if community housing schemes are to be planned and constructed taking into account various health aspects like clean environment, availability of drinking water and waste disposal, along with the actual provision under rules and see physical availability of land for such group housing. There are now bodies like the Urban Arts Commission to take care of ecological protection and improvement in housing colonies in the capital and other big cities. But even here the accent is on provision of common facilities, green belts and 'architectural accommodation' of the appearance of the group housing in relation to the city's general planning and layout. Planning of the houses from the point of view of their role in the health of the inhabitants is a process yet to be evolved.

Special Needs

There are already some isolated attempts. The most notable is the thinking about special provision in housing for the handicapped. These include provision of lifts, special types of stairs and constructions of ramps for wheel-chairs. These also become feasible in a group construction specially for the handicapped or in individual houses. The requirements of general group housing don't make provision for ascertaining the needs of handicapped members and making special arrangements for them.

Even in a purely general way we come across callous construction in buildings that are not

essentially houses but which are used by large number of people for considerable time of the day. The construction of sky-scrapers has, of late, been done in the big cities as competitive land development and real estate business. In those buildings too many people crowded in given floor area partition do off with floor to ceiling wooden walls leave no provision for ventilations and air purification.

The maintenance of staircases and landing areas is so poor that they are usually used as rubbish dumps and spittoons

Even in the prestigious office complexes in the big cities there are no foolproof arrangements to reach water beyond the second or third floor. The result is that lavatories and bathrooms become clogged and dirty in the summer season leading to all sorts of contamination even in the supply of drinking water to various rooms.

Lodging houses have a tendency to convert the available space into as many self-contained units as possible so that the daily earning will be more. Here also there is little attention on water supply, sanitation and ventilation of the rooms.



Pavement dwellers don't even have houses

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The Sharpeville Six were sentenced to death on December 13th 1985, for the alleged murder of a 'community councillor.' On December 1st 1987, they lost their appeal against this sentence, and their legal representatives have said they will now appeal for clemency.

On September 3rd 1984, the disenfranchised militants of South Africa exploded Botha's myth of constitutional reform. on the very day he was inaugurated as State President in Cape Town, the struggle in the Vaal Triangle reached a new level. Marching through the streets of Sebokeng and Sharpeville, the residents rejected the rent increases, which most of could not pay.

Following the example of the police (who had begun shooting people in the street that morning, before the march had even begun) the 'community councillor.' Sam Dlamini, fired on the crowd. In indignation and anger, the crowd killed him. At the end of the day, two 'councillors' lay dead, and another lay dying. Altogether, 250 people were said to have been injured that day. The police admitted to having killed ten people, but forbade the hospitals to publish any figures.

Six people were arrested and charged with the killing of Dlamini — Mojalefa Reginald Sefatsa, Melebo Reid Mokoena, Oupa Moses Dinso, Duma Joshua Khumalo, Theresa Ramashamola and Francis Don Mokhesi. The case against them was always weak, relying on the uncorroborated evidence of an unnamed state witness, and the coerced perjury of a former detainee.

The appeal judgment upheld the death sentences. The judge stated it was probably true that the case against Malebo Mokoena and Theresa Ramashamola had not been proved. Of the other four, he said it was "debatable" whether there was a causal connection between the conduct of each individually and the death of Dlamini. He said:

"I shall therefore assume for the purposes of my judgement that it has not been proved in the case of any of the six accused convicted of murder that their conduct had contributed causally to the death of the deceased." He added that the six people:

"...have been convicted of murder solely on the basis of common purpose."

All pretence at 'proof' has been dropped. According to this judgment, the Six are to be executed, not because they killed Dlamini, but because they shared a 'common purpose' with those who did.

The contempt for natural justice epitomised by this judgment has sent shock waves round the world, giving new impetus to the international campaign to save the lives of all those on death row in South Africa.

The regime still tries new ways of suppressing resistance. Two state of emergency, thousands of detentions and the unleashing of vigilante murder squads have failed to quench an anger that only liberation can satisfy. Pretoria increasingly turns to the gallows to reinforce its tactics of terror.

The appeal judgment broadcast to the whole world a message long understood by the people of South Africa — that mass protest is a capital offence. In other words: Keep off the streets! — the penalty for participation in protest is death!

To those who every day face the bullets and whips of the racists, the answer is equally predictable — the struggle continues! Victory is certain!

At the time of our writing this, 45 men and two women are waiting execution in the death cells of South Africa, on charges arising from people's resistance. Most of them are between twenty and thirty years old.

1. Mohalefa Reginald Sefatsa
2. Oupa Moses Diniso
3. Duma Joshua Khumalo
4. Francis Don Mokhesi
5. Reid Malebo Mokoena
6. Theresa Ramashamola
7. Dickson Madikane
8. Desmond Majola
9. Patrick Manginda
10. Daniel Maleka
11. Josiah Tsawane
12. Paul Tefo Setlaba
13. Similo Lennox Wonci
14. Christopher Maleleni
15. Ndumiso Silo Sephenuko
16. Machezwana Manze
17. Robert McBride
18. Tyeluvuyo Mgedezi
19. Solomon Nongwati
20. Paulos Tsietse Tshlane
21. Mzwandile Gqweba
22. Wanto Silinga
23. Lundi Wana
24. Theminkosi Press Feet
25. Mzwandile Mninzi
26. Monde Tingwe
27. Philip Bhekisizwe Ngidi
28. Oupa Josias Mbonane
29. Sibusiso Senel Masuku
30. Michael Lukas
31. Joseph Chidi
32. Menzi Tafeni
33. Nico Ledube Mnyamana
34. Benjamin Mlondolzi Gxothiwe
35. Johannes Moseki
36. Vuyisile Goni
37. Tshepo Litsoare
38. Gilindola Gxekwa
39. Daisy Modise
40. Thomas Chauke
41. Johannes Tshabalala
42. Mxolisi Malgas
43. Michael Mambukwe
44. Lulamile Maneli
45. Thembisile Baneti
46. Ngqandu Bottoman Mtutuzeli
47. William Ntombela

Executed

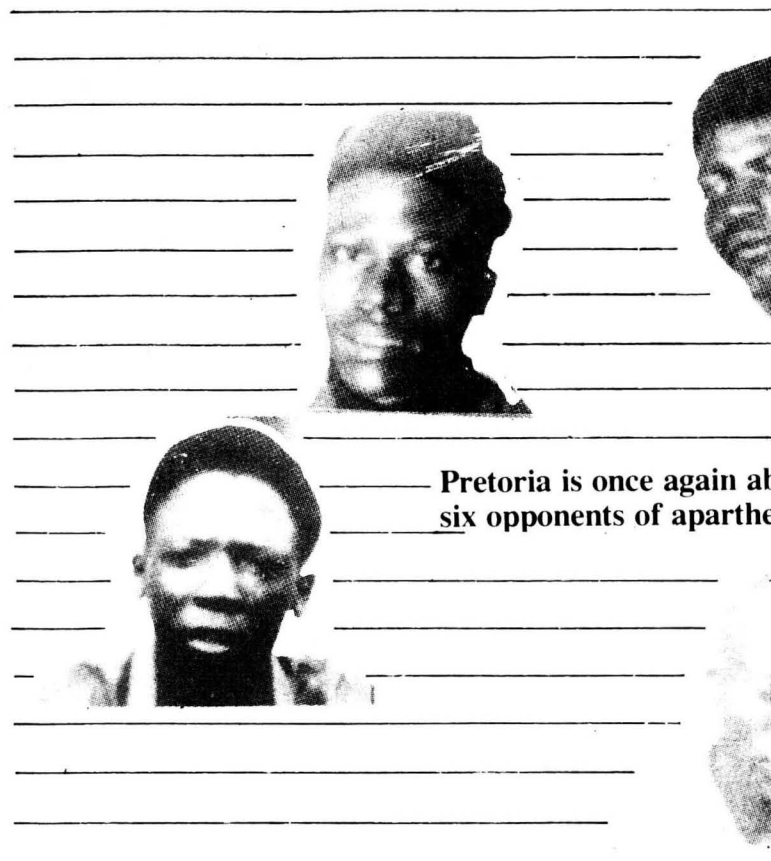
Mnyanda Jantjies and Mlamli Wellington Mielies, both from Kwano-buhle, were executed on September 1st 1987. Later in September it was discovered

that the Pretoria regime had carried out three executions in secret. Solomon Mankopane Maowashe and Alex Matshapa Matsepane, sentenced for the alleged killing of two informers, had been hanged on December 5th 1986. Elile Webushe, sentenced for his alleged involvement in the Jansenville 'necklace' killing, had been hanged on August 19th 1987. Another political activist — Mlungisi Luphondo — was hanged on December 6th 1987.

International protest actions against these executions are taking place on the initiative of the ANC. Amongst these have been unanimous resolutions passed by the Congresses and of the Trades Union Congress and the Liberal and Labour Parties in the United Kingdom, and a resolution adopted by a vote of two to one in the European Parliament, condemning the executions that had already taken place and calling for the EEC to intervene by instituting comprehensive mandatory sanctions.

We call upon the people of the world to use their influence, and the influence of their governments, to stop the hangings.

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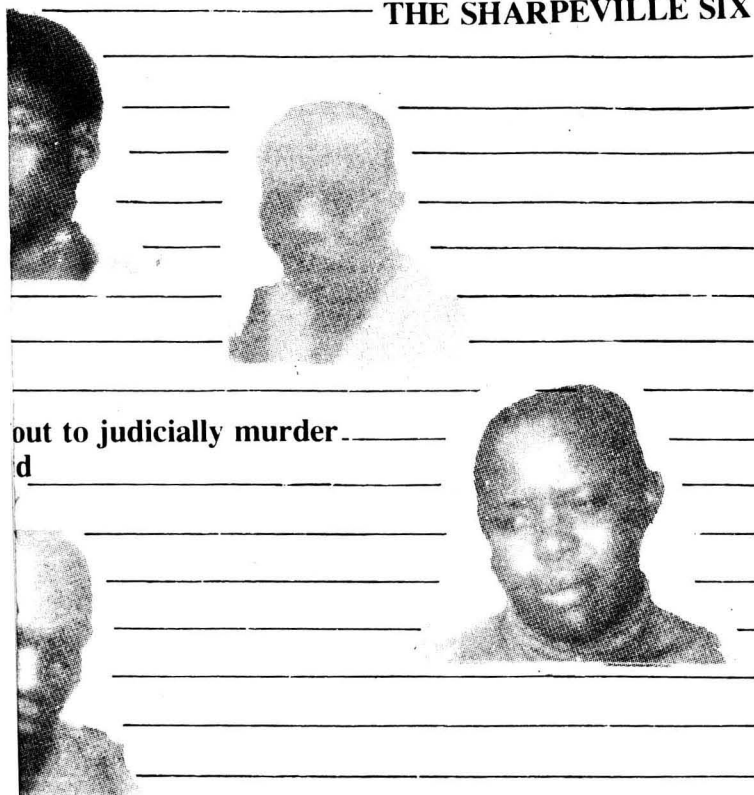


Pretoria is once again ab six opponents of apartheid

END APARTHEID CAMPAIGN TO SA



STAND BY
THE SHARPEVILLE SIX



out to judicially murder—
d

EXECUTIONS!

VE
THEIR
LIVES!

THREE WOMEN: VICTIMS OF APARTHEID PERSECUTION

Sister Bernard Ncube, a Catholic nun and an ex-teacher, is President of the Federation of Transvaal Women, and has done work in support of detainees. She has been detained some six times in the last five years, and now, together with 13 others, is facing charges of 'sedition' and 'subversion.' The trial has come to court and been postponed three times. Energetic, dynamic and brave, she is known in Kagiso as 'Mma Rona' — 'our mother' — because of her leadership and her support for local people.

Theresa Ramashamola is one of the Sharpeville Six, sentenced to death for the killing of the 'community councillor,' Sam Dlamini. She said in court that on the day of the demonstration she had gone home early, after being

hit on the head by a rubber bullet, and had not even known that Dlamini was dead. In detention, she was tortured; during the trial she was physically assaulted again at least once. At the time of her arrest she was 24 years old. Now she is 27. Her mother has told the press: "How would you feel if you had to travel to pretoria each week to visit your doomed child?"

Daisy Modise, aged 25, is awaiting execution in Bophutswana Central Prison. She was sentenced in may 1987, together with two other activists from the Stinkwater Youth Organisation, for "participation in necklace killings." As she is the only woman on death row in that prison, it is likely that she is being held in isolation.



Theresa Ramashamola



Sister Bernard Ncube



NELSON MANDELA HONOURED

On November 11 1987 Karl Marx University, Leipzig, honoured Comrade Mandela by awarding him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (honoris causa) in recognition of his achievements and merits as a theoretician, uncompromising leader of the South African liberation struggle and a dedicated humanist.

Perhaps Some Day

Mannoo Bhandari

The lights on the ship came on suddenly, breaking the dark sheet of water into fissures like a mesh with sparks caught in it. The dazzling array of electric lamps overhead reminded Rakhal of Dewali and he wistfully looked forward to celebrating it with his family. How nice, if he could be at home during the Pujas!

Good that he had not written to his family about his coming; he wanted to give them a surprise. The ship was scheduled to enter the docks at eight. But he got out of his uniform at six and came up to deck. The prospect of bidding goodbye to the infernal engine room for two long months sent a surge of joy through him.

The picture of his house slid before his eyes. A long, low room built over a garage. By the time he reached home his children would be asleep and Mala, his wife, would be finishing the last chores of the evening. All her letters began with the same sentence: "I am late in writing because I had no respite from work." And the inevitable last lines: "I must stop now. There's a huge lot of work awaiting my attention." In between, the sheet of paper was hastily scribbled over with endless recital of domestic problems, rising costs and innuendoes about the children going astray. Her letters bored Rakhal.

In the beginning, when Rakhal first joined the ship he used to read Mala's every letter many times over, but that was the years ago and now time had taken away some of his fervour. Even so, the eagerness of being with his family once again sent a tremor through his heart.

When he was changing in the engine room, his shipmates, in their bluff, crude way poked fun at him: "You, skunk, why are you going up?" To fill your lungs with fresh air? To build up your virility? Hurry up, sala! Otherwise you'll cut a sorry figure in bed."

They twitted Rakhal for sending a major portion of his salary home. He was a fool to throw away his good money on a woman, they said. But when Mala's letters came they gathered round him and read the letters with avid interest. Even her most prosaic letters, churning out domestic inanities, were so reassuring to Rakhal.

He recalled that last time, eight months after his return from leave, his wife had given birth to a daughter, Bulbul, who lived for only ten months. At her birth, Mala had written him an accusing letter. "Chotu is only one and a quarter years old and now another baby has arrived." And when the child died, her letter conveying the sad news was again couched in the same tone: "Hari, why didn't death carry me away in her stead." she

lamented. "She was a gem of a child, the most beautiful of all my children."

Rakhal had neither gloated over the child's arrival nor grieved over the news of her passing away. Rather, he derived some satisfaction that it was all over now. Otherwise, mala would have spoiled his leave, lamenting, day and night, over the girl's untimely death. Soon the shore lights drew nearer and the ship dropped anchor. Taking leave of his friends and officers, Rakhal hurriedly got into a taxi. For one who had remained cooped up in the engine room on the long voyage, the vast expanse of Calcutta with its brightly lit roads was so bracing. Racing along Lansdowne Road, the Taxi turned into a narrow lane and stopped in front of the fourth house. Getting out, he looked at his nondescript, squat house, built over the garage. A dim light was filtering through its only window. The sound of the taxi did not cause any stir in the house. Only a torso was momentarily framed in the window of the opposite house and was gone.

In response to his call, Mala came down hurrying. She stood looking at Rakhal for an instant and then her face lit up with joy. "Is it you? No news! No letter!"

She grabbed the hold-all from Rakhal's hand. Rakhal lifted up the two boxes and made for the dark, narrow staircase while Mala followed him lugging the hold-all, laboriously. On the stairs, Rakhal put down one of the boxes and squeezed Mala's hand. "Be careful," she said, stepping away from him. "I may drop the hold-all."

Entering the room, Mala switched on the tube light. In its glare the fourteen feet long room suddenly crept out of the shadows and the contours of the three children sleeping on patched up mattresses leapt into the light. There were dark circles on Mala's cheeks and streaks of white in her dishevelled hair. A window curtain, made from an old sari had slipped to one side and was flapping in the breeze.

"Why didn't you tell us in advance?" she asked. "We would have gone to the docks to receive you." She was so overwhelmed that she didn't know how to express her feelings.

"Well, go and have a wash," she said after a pause. "I'll be back in a minute."

"I don't want any food," Rakhal said. But she was already out on the staircase.

The glare hurt Rakhal's eyes and he switched off the light, blotting out the naked poverty of the room. Feeling his way through the sprawling children he sat down in the window. It was his favourite seat.

"Why have you switched off

the light?" Mala said as she came into the room. Rakhal could make out her figure etched against the dark—a figure, with which he was as familiar in the dark as with her face in the light.

"I prefer to sit in the dark," he said. "The light may disturb the children's sleep."

"Here's some milk for you," she said handing him a glass. Then she spread out his bedding, covering it with a clean bedsheet which she had kept in reserve.

The alacrity with which she went about her job bespoke her happiness. She kept up a patter of talk as she worked: "Even two years are unbearably long," she said, "and this time you have come after three. Oh, how we missed you at the Pujas! I couldn't even buy new clothes for the children. Dada's electric shop has started giving him good business. He had the tube light fixed up in the room. He could have instead, bought clothes for my children. They went about in old clothes looking wistfully at other children." Mala's voice became strained.

Rakhal was in no mood to listen to mala's recital of woes. She would have enough time for it during his stay. Stretching himself on the bedding he pulled her down by his side. More than her talk, he was interested in her body.

He tried to press her against him, but she wriggled out of his arms. "Please don't!" she said in a frozen voice. "You go away, but I suffer afterwards."

Rakhal held his breath, sensing what was coming next. True enough, Mala launched forth on the Bulbul episode.

"While ill, who would just lie there staring at me with patience," Mala said in a burred tone, "Ma, save me, Ma." she seemed to be entreating all the time, but nothing could save her. Mala burst out crying.

Rakhal's body went cold. It angered him that she was more concerned about the departed one than about him who had come to her on leave after three years.

When he woke up in the morning the room was filled with sunlight and looked less squalid than last night. He yawned and lighted a cigarette. As before, there was a picture of the goddess Durga hanging on the wall, thinly splashed with sandal and roli marks, reminiscent of the recent Puja. By the side of the picture was a brown square mark which reminded Rakhal that his own photograph used to be there. He looked around. The room was devoid of any furniture, except a wooden almirah with glass doors in which were lying a few knick-knacks, collected from abroad during his various sojourns. His photograph was also lying in the

almirah. Its frame had cracked.

Just then Renna peeped in, and finding him awake, stood awkwardly before him, her hands folded in a namaskar.

"Come here, child", Rakhal said, spreading out his arms. Reena was his pet child. But she just stood there smiling diffidently.

In three years she had grown a lot. The incipient swell of her body under her neck made him thoughtful.

Reena ran down and after a while Bachchu came up and perched himself on Rakhal's lap. Soon Mala appeared with the tea things neatly arranged on a tray, followed by Reena carrying the four-year-old Chotu across her hip. Rakhal sensed that they had all been waiting for him to wake up.

Last night's stodgy, dirty-faced children looked spruced up in the home-washed clothes. There was kajal in Chotu's eyes and a thick line of sindur in mala's parting of the hair. Rakhal was pleased. he was indeed being pampered like a V.I.P.—the master of the house.

He wanted to take Chotu in his arms but he hid behind his mother. Last time, when he came home, the boy was only one year old and he used to bounce him on his stomach.

"In a day or two when he comes to know you he'll not let you alone for a minute," Mala said defensively. "Since morning has been asking parrot-like, 'what has papa brought for me?'"

Rakhal opened his box and started taking out the presents. The three children gathered round the box.

"This is for you," he said, handing Mala a small box.

Mala opened the box. Inside lay a tiny wrist watch. "What will I do with a watch at my age?" she said. "I'll keep it for Reena."

The children scampered off with their presents. Then suddenly Rakhal saw Shanker framed in the door. A self-deprecating smile on his face, his lips and teeth were a shade darker than before with constant panchewing.

"Namaskar, Dada," Shanker said in a hearty voice. Somehow Rakhal had never liked the man. "How are you?" he said in a cold voice.

"I'm all right, by your grace," Shanker replied.

"Have some tea, Shanker," Mala said.

"Only tea?" Shanker said baring his stained teeth to the full. "Today it must be something special. You must regale me with sweets." Then he turned to Rakhal. "Dada, this time you have come after a gap of three years. Baudi had a hard time of it. Of course, you never saw Bulbul. Oh, how Baudi suffered for her! She has aged premat-

urely."

Rakhal cast a sharp glance at Shanker. The rascal! How was he concerned with Mala's age?

"Shanker was a great help," Mala said. "But for him Well, you know how indifferent people are these days."

Shanker was wearing a terylene shirt. Rakhal's eyes suddenly travelled to his own foreign-made shirt, hanging on a peg. He pulled the shirt off the peg and put it on. Then he took a packet of cigarettes from its pocket. "Try one of these," he said holding out the packet before Shanker. "They taste different."

"This time we must pay back Shanker's money", Mala said collecting the tea cups. "Even after scraping and scrounging I can't manage to pay him more than ten rupees a month. It's nice of him that he doesn't mind."

Rakhal was incensed at Mala's untimely remark. She had humiliated him before Shanker. he picked up his towel and went into the bathroom.

When he returned he saw that a new table fan was resting on a stool. Evidently, Shanker had sent it at Mala's behest.

He lit a cigarette and sat down in the window.

Shanker's garage, which was adjacent to Mr. Kapur's house, had gained in dimension since he last saw it. Many cars were parked there, awaiting repairs. Shanker appeared from behind a car with Chotu perched on his shoulder. Rakhal recalled that three years ago, when he came on leave he used to carry Chotu on his shoulder in the same manner. he felt as if the hosue had started rocking.

Having nothing to do, Rakhal finished his cigarette and went down to the kitchen at the back of the garage.

"Why have you come here in his stifling heat?" Mala said. "Go up and rest. The ship's food has ruined your health. You look so thin."

But Rakhal did not go. He spread a mat on the kitchen floor and sat down. he suddenly recalled that in the past when he came home on leave, Mala would not let him out of her sight.

The lunch over, Mala asked the children to go to their uncle's house and tell him that their father had come. "And look, don't come back in this blazing sun," she said. "We'll come and pick you up in the evening." then Mala went down to clean the utensils.

Rakhal closed the window and spreading a mat lay down to rest. Perhaps Mala had purposely asked the children to stay back at their uncle's.

The desire to be with Mala which he had felt with such keenness in the taxi last evening again took possession of him.

but Mala gave no indication of coming up. And then to his chagrin, he heard a feminine voice talking to her.

Soon Mala came up.

"Pishima¹ is in the kitchen," she said wiping her grimy hands on the end of her sari. "She is coming up to see you."

"Pishima? Who's Pishima?" Rakhal asked testily.

Before Mala could explain, he found an aged widow standing in the door. "Parnam, Jamai Babu!" the woman said folding her hand in salutation.

"Perhaps you don't know Pishima." Mala said enthusiastically. "But for her, my children would have starved during Bulbul's illness. Pishima cooked for them for six months and also helped me in looking after the house. She's like a mother to me."

The old woman beamed at Mala's fulsome praise and then retraced her steps. Appeased, Rakhal again lay down on the mat. Bless her soul, she seemed to be a woman of understanding.

"Why have you closed the window?" Mala asked. "Don't you feel stifled? You haven't even put on the fan." She flung open the window.

"Close the window, will you?" Rakhal said, with an edge in his voice. "I can't stand the glare."

Mala closed the window and set the fan going. Shanker has sent this fan for you," she said, sitting down by his side. "How thoughtful of him!"

Without giving him a chance to speak, she droned on; "When you return from Dada's house in the evening please do call on Kapur Sahib. He's fabulously rich. But there's not a trace of pride in him. Such people are rare these days. And look, do you mind if I make small presents to his children from the

things you have brought? Of course, such presents means nothing to them. But a gesture is a gesture. And please tell me how much money you have brought with you. I still owe Shanker three hundred rupees. Bulbul's then months' illness has left me utterly decrepit." Stifling a sob, she suddenly trailed into silence.

Had she nothing else to talk about? Shanker, Kapur Sahib, Pishima—he seemed to have no place in her small world. Why didn't she realise that he couldn't do anything about her privations? How he wished that he were a piece of blotting paper and soaked up all her complaints!

In the evening they called on Mala's brother. "Welcome Jamai Babu!" Dada said hugging Rakhal. "This time you've showed up after full three years. but how thin you look! It must be the ship's food. And the salty sea breeze—it corrodes the bones!"

"Damn it! Not the salty tang of

the sea, but those wretched months that I spent at your house during my period of unemployment. That was what corroded my bones!" Rakhal wanted to say. But he just twisted his lips in a grimace and then held his peace.

Dada's three children came bouncing into the room.

"Look, how eager they are to find out what Uncle has brought for them!" Dada's wife said. "You've just stepped in and here they are to claim their toll tax—khe, khe, khe!" She started laughing at her own joke.

Rakhal shoved his hand into his pocket and brought out two pieces of hair ribbons, and two combs which he gave to each of the two girls. And then he gave a cheap pen to the boy.

Dada's wife was disappointed. She took it out on Rakhal by offering him two pieces of sandesh on a plate and a cup of tea. Just that and nothing more. Bachchu and Reena who were playing outside didn't even get these. As they came in they tried to make out from the remnants on the plate as to what their father had gorged himself on.

"The cads!" Rakhal silently gritted his teeth. He would have to make up by buying sweets for the children from the bazaar.

The children again went out to play in the courtyard. Rakhal noticed that Bachchu was walking with a limp in the right leg. He had not noticed this defect before.

"Bachchu, can't you walk straight?" Rakhal shouted to the boy from where he sat. Bachchu, suddenly stopped in his tracks.

"How you go at him!" Dada's wife said in a sarcastic tone. "Why blame him? He was laid up in bed for four months with a fractured leg." Then she heaved a deep sigh. "Oh, what a terrible time Mala passed through recently. Poor Bulbul, alas, she's gone for ever." She wiped away an imaginary tear with the corner of her sari.

When did Bachchu break his leg? Rakhal mentally ran over Mala's letters. No, his memory was not playing tricks with him. She had never alluded to this incident in any of her letters.

"Why didn't you inform me about Bachchu's fracture?" Rakhal went hammer and tongs at Mala as they came out of Dada's house.

"What was the use?" Mala replied in a staid voice. "You would have only worried."

A lot of things had happened in his absence. Bulbul was born and died. Reena was fast growing into womanhood. Bachchu's leg broke and was mended. Chotu had grown out of his swaddling clothes and yet refused to recognise him. And Mala...?

On the way home Dada's house, he stopped in Deshpriya Park and without their asking, bought an anna worth of parched rice for each of the children. As they sat together on a bench munching the delicacy, Rakhal

questioned them about their studies.

"This oaf spends the whole day loafing about," Mala said pointing towards Bachchu. "He was laid up in bed for four months and has become a dud at studies. But he doesn't care. he has no time from play."

Rakhal knew Mala's cantankerous nature; she was in the habit of picking holes in everything, which always annoyed Rakhal, leading to further bickerings. But that evening when he returned home, after spending two hours in the park, he was feeling light at heart. The packet with the read triangle bought on the sly from the chemist's shop was safe in his pocket. He felt reassured.

The room was squalid as before. But now it looked more inviting to him. When he let go to Mala, she lay panting, drenched in perspiration and soon started snoring. The room was no longer so many square feet of space but very much a home. Rakhal lighted a cigarette and sat smoking in the window. Then sleep overcame him.

In the morning Rakhal decided to give the room a face-lift.

Mala tried to stop him, telling him that this was a woman's job. But when he started dusting and moving the things about she decided to lend him a hand. The room could do with a few more things. But he did not have enough money for it. Anyway, he would not be stingy with the children. He would take them on an outing, show them a picture and feed them in a restaurant. let them realise that their father was a somebody.

"Listen." Mala said sitting in front of the fan, after she had finished her chores. "Pishima has a nephew. He has passed his Intermediate and is now working in a factory. in the evening he studies for his B.A."

Rakhal could not make out what she was driving at.

"For a long time Pishima has been asking for Reena's hand for him. Theirs is a small family. Another good thing, they won't demand a big dowry."

Rakhal got a jolt. "Are you in your senses?" he said flaring up. "Reena is too young for marriage. Don't you want her to complete her education?"

"What do you mean young?" Mala replied. "She's going on to be thirteen. I'm not asking you to marry her off tomorrow. But we must keep a boy in view. At the minimum, her wedding will cost three thousand rupees. I'm worried to death wondering where'll so much money come from."

Rakhal didn't know either. "Did you call for me, Rakhal Dada?" Shanker stood there sucking his juice-stained lip.

Rakhal was busy shaving. "Sit down, Shanker," he said briskly working the lather into his chin.

"Ah! you've changed the very shape of the room," Shanker looked around. "I can see your deft touch everywhere. They'll know that the master of the

house has arrived." He chuckled. But this time his laughter did not jar on Rakhal.

"Mala said something about money." Rakhal wiped his face with a dirty towel. "had I known earlier, I would have arranged for the whole amount." There was authority in his voice. Hadn't Shanker said a moment ago that he was the master of the house?

"Arre Dada Babu, where's the hurry? My money is safe with you."

"No, Shanker. A debt is a debt." Rakhal opened a small box and taking out a hundred rupee note handed it to Shanker.

Shanker pocketed the note and went away. Rakhal counted the remaining money. Eighty rupees. When he got his next month's salary he would have to part with the bulk of it for Mala to run the house. A big chunk would be gone on the children's entertainment. And then the end of his leave. He would go away empty-handed.

Suddenly Ranju's words echoed in his ears: "Sailors should never marry. They sweat their guts out, night and day, tending machines and it's their wives who reap the benefit. What's the use? We're better off, brother. We can sow wild oats at every port and no holds barred!"

Pishima's nephew was coming with his uncle. Mala had invited them despite Rakhal's opposition. She had also asked her brother to be present on the occasion.

The brother gatecrashed much in advance of the appointed time. Clad in a white starched kurta and a Dacca dhoti, he looked imposing as if he was the master of the house and Rakhal his underling.

Mala had tidied up the room and had sent for a carpet, a few chairs and some pieces of crockery from Mr. Kapur's house.

The boy came—a squat youth, extremely dark and pockmarked. Rakhal had decided that he would hold the rein of discussion and not allow Dada to monopolise the stage. but his enthusiasm, the little that he had been able to work up, suddenly ebbed away.

"Rakhal Babu, we were keen to meet you. But your visits are so few and far between," the boy's uncle made the first gambit, while taking his seat.

There was a flicker of smile round Rakhal's lips. The fellow seemed to have a shrewd eye. He knew who wore the pants in the house.

After some small talk the uncle again turned to Rakhal. "You've visited many countries," he said. "Don't you think our Indian culture is superior to theirs—in fact, the best?"

The question pleased Rakhal. The uncle seemed to be impressed by his foreign peregrinations. but before he could open his mouth, Dada chipped in, "Oh, no, Ganguli Babu. Don't forget, Rakhal Babu remains cooped up in the engine room all the time. Where has he the time

to stop off the ship and study cultures?" Then he turned to Rakhal, "Anyway, Jamai Babu, if you have had the opportunity to go places did you find anything comparable to our culture?"

Rakhal sizzled with anger. What did Dada think he did on the ship? Cleaned the commodes?

Ganguli Babu, proud of the fact that even in these hard times he had managed a job for his nephew, marked his triumph by devouring one rasogolla after another. Dada was not the one to be outdone so easily. Equally eager to drive home the point that the girl's people were in no way inferior to the boy's, he took the challenge with great gusto and kept peace with Ganguli Babu.

"Fire away!" Rakhal scowled as one rasogolla after another vanished into Dada's mouth. Did he think it was a free-for-all? Didn't he remember that he had offered him only two small pieces to sandesh when he visited his house?

As soon as the uncle and his nephew departed, Rakhal announced that the boy was not at all to his liking. "Tell Pishima to terminate the negotiations forthwith," he said. He was himself surprised at the stern note in his voice.

"Jamai Babu, you won't get such a good boy easily," Dada protested. Don't forget that the boy is employed. That's what really matters—not looks or complexion. Besides, he won't demand a huge dowry. Can you bear the burden of a dowry? Now come off it, let's be frank about it."

"I've told you I won't have him," Rakhal persisted. "And that's my concern, not yours. Did you look at the boy's face?"

"You stay away most of the time," Dada said. "It's we who face the music in your absence. How can you expect me to shoulder the burden of your family in addition to my own in such hard times?"

Dada went away seething with anger.

"Did you see how he insulted me?" Rakhal said, turning to Mala. "Are you happy now? Like brother like sister!"

Mala burst out crying. Rakhal went out, leaving Mala weeping. He bought a betel leaf at the corner shop, and licking lime of a stick, went for a stroll in the park. By rejecting the boy he had scored over his wife and her brother. Didn't they know who he was? Nothing could happen against his wishes.

Rakhal fixed a routine for all the members of the family.

Having worked in the ship's engine room for so long he had forgotten that he was a B.Sc. His own life was a sorry mess. He was therefore all the more anxious that his children should make good in life. He vividly recalled that in his earlier days when he was working on a job in Calcutta and Reena was born he had decided that he would make

Continued on page 12

Siachin Imbroglia

Siachin glacier is sandwiched between Karakoram ranges on the North and Saltoro range to the South. The glacier is seventyfour kilometers long and is one of the longest glaciers in the world. The Nubra Tehsil in which Siachin is located has always been part of the Leh district. Snowbound the year round, the glacier is located seven thousand meters above MSL.

Since the summer of 1984 there have been clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops in the area. ON 23 June, 1984, Pakistan troops tried to occupy by force one of the passes on the Saltoro range, the Bilafond La, but were beaten back.

ZIA-RAJIV MEET

In December, 1985, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, and the Pakistan president, General Zia-ul-Haq met in New Delhi. In that meeting the two countries agreed to move towards normalisation of relations, and to settle this issue through peaceful negotiations. A beginning was made through talks at the level of Defence Secretaries.

SECRETARY LEVEL MEETS

The Defence Secretary, Mr. S.K. Bhatnagar visited Islamabad in January 1986 and had a two-day meeting with his Pakistani counterpart, Mr. Iqbal Haider Zaidi. At this meeting they held free and frank discussions. Both sides stated their respective positions. This was followed by another meeting and the two Defence Secretaries met again in New Delhi in June, 1986. Not much progress was made towards resolving the issue. This was not surprising. The issue itself is a complex one.

In September last year, Pakistan launched a major offensive to gain control of four major passes on the Saltoro range, the Sia La, Indira Col, the Bilafond and the Saltoro.

FOURTH PAK ATTEMPT

A Defence Ministry spokesman described the attack as the fourth major attempt by Pakistan to dislodge Indian troops from the commanding heights on the Saltoro range. Pakistani troops made simultaneous attempts to take control of the four passes on 23rd, 24th and 25th of September. But it is believed that Pakistan sustained heavy casualties, almost one hundred and fifty.

Internally, Pakistan government had come in for more and more trenchant and shrill criticism over Siachin. Pakistan's opposition parties, notably Ms.

Benazir Bhutto's People's Party, have mounted a strident campaign against the government on this issue.

In November last, at the SAARC summit at Kathmandu, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, and the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Junejo decided to resume negotiations at the Defence Secretary level.

The third round of Defence Secretaries talks on the Siachin was expected in December 1987 but was delayed.

The Defence Secretary, Mr.

R.K. Mathur

Bhatnagar's visit to Islamabad earlier this week was the occasion of a meaningful and valuable exchange of ideas. One outcome of the Islamabad talks was that Defence Secretaries of both countries considered certain specific proposals and agreed to examine them further at their next meeting. Both sides expressed their determination to work for a negotiated agreement. Next round of talks is expected to take place by September in New Delhi.

Shri Mathur is AIR Correspondent in Islamabad



Defence Minister K.C. Pant looking at a KC-47 Rifle Captured at Saichin. more important reason why the attacked

Gurdwara in Iraq

Incongruous as it may seem a gurdwara here that commemorates Guru Nanak's visit to Iraw is being maintained by a strapping Arab.

Thirty two-year-old Hassan Abu-Nur functions as custodian of the gurwara. All religious places in Iraq are being looked after by the Endowment Ministry.

Every Friday the historic gurdwara resounds to the strains of shabad kirtan as devotees, mainly Indian workers, gather in its precincts.

Clad in white, Hassan Abu-Nur gives a vivid account of the sanctity of the gurudwara and Guru Nanak's visit to Iraq in 1520. During his stay here the Guru held numerous discussions with important religious leaders, including Pir Bahlel Dana, a renowned Muslim saint, on mysticism and other related topics.

The Iraqi Government has handed over the keys of the gurdwara to the Indian Embassy for holding religious ceremonies.

Guru Nanak stayed here for two months after returning from Meekca. He was Pir Bahlel Dana's guest and used to hold discourses with him on religious matters.

The gurdwara is now spread over one acre of land close to the Baghdad railway station.

The Sikh Guru is said to have met the Caliph of Baghdad, who presented him with "a chola or cloak" with the verses of the Koran on it. The "chola" is still preserved in Dera Baba nanak.

Impressed by the Guru Nanak the Caliph treated him as a honoured guest. Most of the time during his stay here, Guru Nanak spent with Bahlel Dana in a small room, which has now been converted into the sanctum sanctorum. A picture of the Guru is displayed on the wall of the room, where every pilgrim is given prasad.

The adjacent room of the gurdwara is the mausoleum of Bahlel Dana and his family members. The wife of the Muslim

sait used to prepare food for Guru Nanak.

Some Indians who were posted in Iraq during World War-I discovered in 1917 in the tomb of Pir Bahlel an inscription in Turkish referring to Guru Nanak. This was made public through a printed letter issued here on May 9, 1918, by subedar Major Fateh Singh.

An Indian Muslim from Lahore Syed Sharif Hussian who had gone to Iraq in connection with pilgrimage and business contributed for the construction of the sanctum sanctorum. Since then visitors from India have helped the Shrine's renovation and expansion through donations.

The Gurudwara attracted hundreds of Indian workers in mid seventies when Indian companies came to Iraq to execute major works, including constructions, housing complexes and

other projects.

Some Indian companies undertook renovation work at the gurdwara.

The shrine is opened only on Friday (local holiday). Some Indians go to gurdwara on Thursday night to clean it and prepare food for the devotees.

As the number of Indian workers has dwindled from 60,000 to 10,000, hardly 100 devotees now join the Shabat Kirtan. but on the occasion of Gurburab and Baisakhi their number goes upto 3,000 when Indians from neighbouring areas come to participate in the religious ceremonies.

Besides larger, several rooms have been constructed in the gurdwara premises.

Mausoleums of great Muslim saints, including Junaid Baghdad, are situated near the gurdwara.

Perhaps Some Day

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her a doctor. And now...

But before he could put the children in their stride his leave came to an end and so did his money.

"How nice if we could settle Shanker's debt." Mala said, as she lay by Rakhal's side. "We still owe him two hundred rupees."

Rakhal was annoyed. She had again spoiled his mood. Why couldn't she make the last night of his stay pleasant for him? A heaviness descended over his heart.

The next day his ship was scheduled to leave at ten but he was at the docks at eight, along with Mala and the children. After donning his uniform he returned to the quay and stood alongside Mala and the children. When the time for the ship's departure came, he hastily handed Chotu to Mala and made to go. Chotu cried, "Baba, baba," and started kicking his legs. Reena averted her face and quickly wiped away the tears from her eyes. When Mala bent down to touch his feet, Rakhal could not hold back his tears.

"Please take good care of your health," Mala said between sobs. "And don't forget to send Shanker's money."

The ship had started on her voyage, yet above the din and clatter of her engines and the noise of the churning waters, Rakhal could still hear the feeble crying of Chotu.

Then the docks disappeared and their place was taken up by his Lansdowne Road house. he saw that Mala had dumped the mattresses in a corner and had put the boxes back in their previous places. The table fan and the stool were no longer there, nor was his photograph on the

mantelpiece. Perhaps Mala had consigned it to the almirah to save it from damage.

Shanker was standing by Mala's side, consoling her, "Why do you cry, Baudi? I'm here to look to your comforts."

None of the children was there, Reena must be at the Kapur's, talking and laughing with their daughter, Pammi. Bchchu must be out on the streets, loafing about with the street urchins. Chotu must have escaped to Shanker's garage. For all he knew, Pishima would again start visiting his house. He won't be surprised if she renewed her proposal about Ganguli babu's nephew. They all seemed to favour the match.

Rakhal shook his head. Suddenly he felt as if he had come out of a false world.

"What are you doing here, hanging over the railing?" somebody thumped his back. Rakhal sharply turned round. Ranju stood there, laughing.

"Go down to the engine-room. That's where you belong, son." Ranju said, thumping him on the back again.

Rakhal quietly descended the stairs to the engine-room. The same machines, the same familiar smell. He seemed to have found his lost bearings.

"Mate, you shouldn't be so chummy with your family," Ranju said. "Take it from me, your guru. Our fate is tied down with these machines. Son, machines we are and to machines we belong. That's what I have been telling you all the time. Here, take this oil can and feed the machines."

Rakhal took the oil can from Ranju and with great concentration of mind, pressed its nozzle into a hole.

Letters

1988 Ordinance

Though, the ordinance of 1988 have some very useful provisions to curb terrorism and activities of anti-national persons, but it also has certain clauses which are impracticable and are bound to create more complications in an already explosive political situation. It is necessary to point out dangerous aspects of it, so that necessary remedial measures can be taken.

The ordinance not only prohibits the entry of arms and ammunition or any explosives in a religious institution, but lays down very severe punishment against those who would violate the order. The Kirpan has been excluded from the category of weapons. The Kirpan word has been written in thick print showing respect to the sentiments of the Sikhs, and taking care that no one is given an opportunity to exploit Sikh sentiments. However taking care of religious sentiments on paper only will not serve any purpose, unless in practice life the Sikhs are trusted in possession of Kirpan in public while having audience with VVIPs. Though, I have been aware of the distrust and disrespect being shown to the Sikhs carrying Kirpan by the security men it did not make deep dig on my mind till I was confronted myself at the residence of Mrs. Mohsina Kidwai-Minister for Works & Housing on May 26, 1988 when I went to meet her. At the gate the security staff inquired if I was carrying Kirpan on my body. I asked him, why should he inquire or question my wearing Kirpan. He very politely replied that as per orders the Sikhs cannot be allowed to go in with Kirpan. The other day some Sikhs cannot be allowed to go in with Kirpan. The other day some Sikh ladies deputation went to meet the President, but they were not allowed to meet the President since they were wearing Kirpans. They had to come back dejected. It is very strange that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi the Prime Minister can receive even full size Kirpan from the Sikhs but a Sikh wearing Kirpan cannot meet him, excepting some owned Jathedars.

Before we get on with the task of separating political activities from the religious one, it needs to be appreciated that what matters is the Man and his mental attitude and not the place-be it a religious stage of political/Parliament or a private gathering. The fact is that basic character of our country is religious, and peoples minds are tuned accordingly. The parliament too discusses both political and religious matters. Therefore to produce a wall between these two aspects of our society will be unnatural and impracticable, and shall remain source of uneasy political functioning.

The clause 2 (d) deals with the definition of "political activities", which includes any activity promoting or propagating the aims and objectives of a party or any cause, issue or question of a political nature by organising meeting and so on. How can these activities be made illegal on any religious stage. Because, it is within the purview of any political party to object to any ordinance or law treading upon the fundamental rights and obtain justice for the cause may be social, political or religious. As per the Sikh religious tenets every Sikh is to join daily congregation and have open discourses on all matters pertaining to daily life. And the decisions taken by the Sangat (The Sikh Congregation) are to be respected and implemented. This is the Special feature of the Sikhism which constitutes the philosophy of Miri & Piri (Temporal and Spiritual) given by the Sikh Gurus.

The clause 8 (1), deals with the manager of a religious institution. The Sikh Gurdwaras or institutions are of two distinct categories. One is the historical Gurdwaras and other local Gurdwaras. The historical Gurdwaras have paid managers where as all Singh Sabhas which are in villages and towns and there number runs into thousands are purely managed by volunteers. They see to it that no illegal arms or ammunition is allowed to enter in their respective Gurdwaras nor any bad characters are given any aid or shelter to reside.

But the Sikh way of life must be appreciated from the dictates of the Sikh Gurus and the examples they set for the Sikh Community. This guide will only provide proper understanding and good relationship between the Sikhs and the Government. The first Sikh Guru-Guru Nanak Dev Ji was a great Karanti kari (Revolutionary). He raised political upheaval against Mughal atrocities committed on Hindus and the casteism spread by the Brahmins which had made India a weak country enslaved it under foreign hells. Guru Gobind Singh Ji with the advent of PANJ PIARE (Five respected/trusted Sikhs) philosophy, gave birth to democratic system in all walks of life, and gave secular base by having Five Piaras from different castes (High and low) from different parts of India, and set a unique example of obtaining Amrit (Nectar) from the Fives, whom he himself baptized, thus vesting them with collective authority and made them supreme, which was above the Guru himself. The life style of Ten Gurus gave base of democracy and secularism contained in Miri and Piri. Finally the eternal Guru-Sri Guru Granth Sahib-of the Sikhs, tied the Sikhs with the

spirit and mission of universal brotherhood and granting equality of status to all human beings, thus uniting Hindus and Muslims and removing barrier between low and high castes by containing hymns from Muslim saints and saints of all castes. The inspiration to make total sacrifice

by an individual or collectively for the sake of creating and maintaining healthy society which the Sikh community gets from the Sikh life style cannot be provided from any other source. Therefore, the question before us is, can with this background of the Sikhism, the Sikhs should be

asked or expected to accept any other style of their life or performance. If they resist should it be objected.

Yours etc.
Lt. Col. Manohar Singh (Retd)
Defence Colony
New Delhi.

How can the psychic wounds of Sikhs be healed

Sir,

I am much impressed by the keynote address delivered by Syed Shahabuddin M.P. in Vancouver, Canada, on "Centralised State Power and Threat to Minorities" which has been published in your issue June 20th.

There is no doubt that the present individual terrorism in Punjab owes its origin to Operation Blue Star in the Golden Temple, Amritsar, in June 1984. Then our Government, just to capture one Bhindrawalla and his fifty or so followers (the maximum number which can be accommodated in the Akal Takht and who had taken shelter there) used the full might of the Indian army and even tanks. This not only resulted in the total destruction of the Akal Takht, the Vatican of Sikhs, but it also burnt the psyche of all Sikhs all over the world.

And then two days after the Operation Blue Star had been over, the Indian Army destroyed Guru Ram Dass Library in Amrit-

sar which contained the most precious treasures of the Sikh history and the holy Granth Sahibs which were written by the gurus themselves. These losses will never be retrieved. The emotions of Sikhs, by this act of vandalism, were so much disturbed that the Sikhs who visited the Golden temple after the Operation Blue Star thought it a great honour to pick up the ashes of those burnt holy books and put them on their forehead:

The second time when the Sikh psyche was hurt was in November 1984 when for the crime of two Sikhs who had assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the whole Sikh community was considered criminal and punished in Delhi and all Congress (I) ruled States in India. Thousands of Sikhs were roasted alive through organised violence, and their women folk raped. This genocide against the Sikhs produced most of the present terrorists in Punjab, who out of anger and frustration, have gone and they have started kil-

ling even innocent people. It is a pity that our government have not yet for the past four years, punished even a single culprit of the 1984 Sikh genocide and misguided Sikh youth, who have become terrorists, have started taking law in their own hands:

The Punjab problem can only be solved if our Government does justice to Sikhs to punish the culprits of 1984 Sikh genocide and asks for the forgiveness for its wrong doings in 1984. Sikh Gurus have taught that forgiveness is a great and noble virtue. One should never miss an opportunity to exercise forgiveness and one should never think of taking revenge. And if our present Government rulers also adopt such a method of asking for forgiveness, that would modify the hurt Sikh psyche and would go a long way to restore normalcy to Punjab.

Yours etc.

(Mahindar Singh)
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Sikh Militancy

The current Militancy :

The current militancy in the State of Punjab has been widely portrayed in the world press as a religiously motivated campaign involving handful of misguided youth, who are indulging in violence helped and abetted by Pakistan, local Sikhs and Sikhs abroad with a view to de-stabilise the political integrity of India. This deliberate perspective is completely out of context, and has been given world-wide publicity by the Govt. of India, who are one of the parties to the conflict.

There are perhaps five types of gun-wielding agencies, simultaneously at work :-

- i) Groups or individuals, who are hard core committed young men inspired by the atrocities on Sikhs all over India and are labelled as belonging to Bhandranwale cult.
- ii) Local bad characters, who exhort money from relatively well to do people by posing as terrorists and do not hesitate to use Golden Temple complex as a base.
- iii) Local bad characters, particularly belonging to scheduled classes, who are hired by people for sorting out either old feuds, political differences or with a view to inherit land by wiping out complete families.
- iv) Arming of some selected persons by agencies within India to add confusion to the above three types, so that, blame may be passed on to (i) above and thus create a fear and hatred in the minds of the local population.
- v) The para-military forces are now being blamed for atrocities besides providing protection. Some local people blame them for keeping a deliberate blind eye in the smuggling of arms from Pakistan by taking bribes, and they say this in confidence but not make open statements for fear of punishment.

Govt. of India, politicians belonging to the ruling party, BJP and Communist's shed a lot of Crocodile tears but do not seem to be worried about the killings unless some important persons or relatives are killed. Sikhs and Punjabi Hindus are confused but only the trading class in Punjab is really alarmed. Govt. of India will realize the gravity of the situation only in the event of an Indo-Pak war which is perhaps a remote possibility in the near future.

Way Out

Four warnings deserve to be brought to the notice of the public at this time particularly to the present Haryana Govt. which is peasant-oriented.

Firstly, any undue hurry in the completion of SYL Canal may result in sub-standard work

resulting in breaches.

Secondly, there should be no false hope that Punjab will permit a reduction in its share of existing flow of water which was guaranteed under the Rajiv-Longowal agreement. Haryana Govt. should press for the early completion of Thein Dam to ensure that surplus Ravi water is diverted for use in SYL Canal.

Thirdly, the barren areas of Ropar and Patiala districts through which this canal flows in Punjab territory also deserve irrigation facilities and Punjab Govt. seems to be silent on the subject. It may be necessary to arrange lift irrigation in some areas. In tube well irrigated areas, water table is falling at an alarming rate. Fourthly, Haryana Govt. will do a good service to the common cause to refrain from issuing provocative statements regarding claim on Abohar - Fazilka area etc. Any such statements by Punjab and Haryana people should be for mutual harmony, rather than increasing the existing differences of opinion. It is only this way that both will gain, otherwise they will continue to be a prey to divide and fight.

What should Sikhs do at this Juncture :

In my personal view, there is Guru's curse also in Sikh Community for their departure from Sikh ethics, increasing misuse of Gurdwara funds and for their failure to maintain the sanctity of the holy shrines. I take the liberty to suggest an interim aim for the Khalsa Panth and to concentrate on it instead of dissipating energies on other pursuits. Before writing down the aim and the means to achieve it, let us accept the fact that vast majority of us are Sikhs for the purpose of counting numbers, votes and show of external features only. Singhs are still less in numbers. Like a child, we have to start from class one and before embarking upon fulfilling the aim consider ourselves zero—I repeat an urdu couplet of Iqbal also in this connection.

The emergence of a new Sikh Sangat, enlightened and having adopted the true Sikh way of life as per Guru Nanak's word, "Truth is higher than everything but higher still is true living; 'Sucho Ure Sab Ko upar Sach Achar.' (A.G.P. 62) can only give a worthwhile united and meaningful guidance for solving polit-

ical, economic and other allied problems. In this process of rebuilding through proper and large scale preaching (Gurmat Parchar) a prominent and positive role, must be given to Sikh youth.

In order to achieve this aim, we need the grace of God, self-help, true guidance and hard work. Let us first turn to the last order of Guru Gobind Singh and to the only Stanza mentioned on P. 1429 of AG, before he physically left, this world. Bal hoa Bandhan Chhutte, Sab Kuchh Hot upae; Nanak Sab Kuchh tumre Hath main, Tum Hi Hot Sahae.

Last order or commandment

'Agya Bhai Akal Ki Tabbi Chhalay Panth,
Sab Sikhon Ko Hukam Hai Guru Manyo Granth,
Guru Granth Ji Manyo, Pargat Guran Ki Deh,
Jo Prabhu Ko Mil Bochahe, Khoj Shabad Main Leh.'

This is made further clear on P. 982 of Shri Guru Sahib as Under:-

'Bani Guru; Guru hai Bani, Wich Bani Amrit Sare,
Gur Bani Kahe, Sewak Jan Mane, Partakh Guru Nistare.'

Both expositions mean almost the same thing, which is that the above command of Guru-ship was issued because Guru Granth Sahib as a scripture represents the embodiment of the spiritual teachings of the Sikh Gurus, Hindu Bhaktas and Muslim Fakirs. "Sikhi Sikhya Gur Vichar" P. 465 (AG).

It is, thus catholic and universal in nature - Guru Nanak's Guru was 'Word', 'Name', 'Shabad', 'Satnam', the 'Absolute One'; and Guru Gobind Singh again restored the Guru-ship to the Word, Name, Shabad, Satnam and the Absolute One. The aim of life as per Sikh Guru's teachings is not to attain salvation or a heavenly abode called Paradise, but to develop the best in man here on earth which is God or the spirit manifesting Him, or in other words the loving union of the soul with God through 'Name' or 'Shabad'. Guru Nanak has explained how to see God and love him. This is, however, not the place to go into religious philosophy but it is sufficient to say that Sikhism is a way of life which lays special emphasis on the uplift of character right here and now.

Aurangabad Riots

Continued from page 4

This anti-climax was most explosive in its consequences.

It was wrong on the part of the Congress to have coveted the Mayor's post and that too by wooing the Muslim League. To genuinely attend to Muslims grievances is one thing and it is another thing to ally with a communal organisation like the Muslim League. However such has been the Congress's political behaviour i.e. not to solve genuine problems of the Muslims and to readily ally with their communal organisations like the League. When it (i.e. the congress) did so it should have easily anticipated what was in store and should have taken preventive measures.

The Chief Minister Mr. Chavan did anticipate some trouble, as per his own press statements. But he completely failed to take any preventive measures. Not only that, the police force in the town was not strengthened but on 16th May a SRP platoon was removed for Eid bundobust elsewhere. This was done despite warnings of danger by the Cong-I party MLA Mr. Motiwala and others. It was a most unwise step which the administration would rue now. Many responsible people told our researcher Mr. S. Insaf that if the administration had been alert, and had it so desired, the riots could have been certainly prevented. But it was not to be.

Fateful Day

The inevitable at last happened on the fateful day of 17th May, just a day before the Muslim Eid. A large crowd gathered outside the court where a petition challenging the election of the Mayor was coming up for hearing. An alert administration would not have allowed such a huge crowd to gather there, specially when tempers of the Shiv Sainiks were frayed and the Muslim League had allied itself with the Congress to frustrate the Shiv Sena attempt to capture the mayoralty. Also, right outside the court, Mr. Chagan Bhujbal, the Sena leader who is notorious for his communal outbursts, was threatening that the whole city (of Aurangabad) would burn if the judgement went against them (i.e. if the mayoral election were not set aside). But something quite unexpected happened: the hearing was adjourned for a week.

The unruly sena crowd went berserk and started moving towards the city, burning rickshaws and shops.

The police clamped curfew at about 1.15 p.m. i.e. within two-hours of the outbreak of disturbances. But the curfew was of little avail. Arson and loot continued almost unabated. The Lokmat Times, a local English daily wrote, "Arson, stone throwing and stabbing incidents took place with lightning speed and

even before one could realise what was happening the entire city was in grip of fear and panic. Marauding groups of people appeared in many areas and went at out stoning many cars, scooters and others vehicles...." the affected area were Baujipura, Jinsi, Kaiser colony, Chistiya colony, Indiranagar, Sector N-7 in CIDCO, Lota karanja, Shahganji, Mulumchi Bazar, Gandhi chowk, Roshan Gate, Kasari Bazar, Aurangpura and Gulmandi. The mobs belonging to two different communities clashed in Rangargalli throwing stones at each other.

The Events

Stabbing incidents took place in Jijmata colony, Nehru Bhavan, Juna Baar, Khara Kunwa, Rangar Gully, Kaiser colony and Jusi.

Mr. Chavan the Chief Minister and the Central Home Minister, Mr. Buta Singh, reached Aurangabad to take stock of the situation. As the situation was serious, the Chief Minister issued orders to shoot at sight. However, in view of Eid, curfew was relaxed from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. on 18th May to enable Muslims to offer Eid Prayers. But when the Muslims were coming back after prayers, disturbances started again and the police fired in which five Muslims were killed.

The riots broke out on 19th May in Paithan 55 kilometers from Aurangabad and in a village called Bidkin. Both in Paithan and Bidkin trouble broke out in reaction to what happened in Aurangabad and was directed against the Muslims. In Paithan,

according to the police sources, 7 persons were killed in various stabbing incidents and nine were injured.

Violence incidents took place in lalna too which is a flourishing business centre in Marathwada. Shiv Sena tried to hoist its flag near the Jama Masjid and tension mounted on 19th May. The violence broke out on 20th in which two persons were killed and 45 injured. Weapons like knives, swords and wooden sticks were used for attack. The Sena hand was obvious in the Jalna riot. When the Sena district Chief Mr. Shivaji Chothe was asked about the accusation he only curtly replied he was out of station.

Political Strategy

Thus it would be seen that the current round of violence in Marathwada is mainly a political strategy of Shiv Sena which is trying to exploit Hindu sentiments for its own ends. It is a highly dangerous trend in Maharashtra. Unfortunately there is no single leader of vision who can check this trend. S B Chavan who otherwise is non-communal has been paralysed with dissidence in his own party and lacks courage to take any action against the Sena chief. It is a pity that the chief Minister of a state is afraid of taking action against the head of a communal outfit which is doing immense among of damage secularism in the country.

Indo-China Relations

Continued from page 11

denced by the very fact that its present volume amounts to 120 million US dollars.

According to the Indian sources, China supplied to Pakistan 200 tanks, equipment for two divisions, two MIG-9 squadrons and several bombers in 1966. In the following years the rate of Peking help to Pakistan has grown immensely. According to the data published in the American Press, by 1970s the Chinese-supplied tanks account for more than 25 percent of total of Pakistan's tanks, the airplanes account for 33 percent with 65 percent of the fighters and 90 percent of the bombers supplied by China. Military cooperation reached even greater heights in the following decade.

Another important aspect of the military cooperation between Peking and Islamabad is the construction of strategic roads. A case in point is the Karakorum road linking the Chinese region of Xinjiang with Pakistan. The purpose of this 800 - Km strategic road is to give China access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The twenty-year work of Chinese soldiers on this strategic thoroughfare running through the Himalayas was no act of altruism: China was, in the process, to be facilitated in the pursuance of her chauvinistic policy in the sub-continent. This important road allows China to transfer, at short notice, large contingents motorised infantry formations, tanks and heavy artillery to the border along India. These facilities have already been made use of for the movement of Chinese troops in the region. It is no secret that this allows China to effect a fast movement of troops and materials through two main passes in the Himalayas and to take in flank the Indian forces in the Ladak region.

This picture of military cooperation between Peking and Islamabad would remain incomplete if one leaves out another area of active cooperation in recent years, namely, China's role in Pakistan's nuclear programme. According to Western and Indian sources Chinese's cooperation in the area of nuclear energy in Pakistan is ten years old. It is widely believed that China assists Pakistan in developing an "Islamic bomb" by supplying it with enriched uranium. According to some intelligence centres, China has given Pakistan considerable information pertaining to the development of the nuclear bomb and thus enriching her nuclear potential. Senator Alan Cranston has given facts which prove that China has supplied Pakistan with the know-how, the materials and the technology for developing

nuclear weapons.

It is only in late last year, as the France Press agency reported from Peking that, China admitted, for the first time, of its cooperation with Pakistan in the nuclear sphere though ostensibly for peaceful purposes. Similar statements were made by the Pakistani leaders too who stressed that what they were seeking was a peaceful use of nuclear energy. These declarations of Peking and Islamabad, however, remained unconvincing. The Pakistani regime is notorious for its militancy which led her to attack India on several occasions in the last two decades.

It is now being said that Pakistan has become capable of coming up with its own nuclear weapons in the near future. For the first time this year the annual report of the Indian Defence Ministry has raised the question of nuclear weapons on the sub-continent. The report stresses the "persistent efforts of Pakistan to acquire the capability to produce nuclear weapons with the assistance and tacit approval of some countries".

It is obvious that the increased Pakistani military power created largely through the assistance of Peking and Washington poses problems which do not remain confined to South-Asia alone. It is more than clear that by encouraging and assisting Pakistan's militarisation, the United States and China are seeking to promote their own influence in the region, the Indian Ocean included. This policy whose primary aim is to curb India's influence would inevitably result in an upsetting of the balance of forces in this region. The proponents of this course need hardly be reminded that such a policy is laden with risks. It is unlikely that the countries whose security and stability is threatened and those interested in the preservation of stability in region will resign themselves to such sinister attempts by US and China. It would open up the notorious Pandora's box of problems of international peace and security. It is thus quite reasonable for India to oppose the increasing militarisation of Pakistan which endangers the stability of the region.

The Border Question;

Notwithstanding the Chinese aggression of India in 1962, India had tried to follow the policy of forget and forgive. Of late, especially since the process of De-Maoisation has begun in China, Peking has also expressed desire for improved relations with India. There has been some exchanges of dele-

gations between the two countries in the recent years to sort out some of the thorny problems. However, the basic problem of the border question still remains unresolved. There have been six rounds of discussions on the border dispute between the representatives of India and China so far -- five of these have been of preparatory nature and it is only now that the real problem is being sorted out.

While the border question continues to be the bone of contention and an obstacle in the normalising of diplomatic relations between India and China, other pin-pricks often fan the existing conflict.

The obvious suspicion of India of the Chinese designs is substantiated by the unfortunate course of history between the two countries. The first Prime Minister and the architect of Modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru, had always looked upon China as a friend and ally in fighting imperialism and colonialism. Jawaharlal Nehru was not wrong in reposing this kind of a confidence in China due to obvious similarity between the two countries -- both remained victim of imperialism and colonialism for long, and also both express the great Asian culture and tradition.

But the initial border dispute, its escalation and a unilateral war by China on India in 1962 virtually buried the doctrine of "bhai-bhai". It came as a rude shock to India and especially its Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. It was a virtual stab in the back. It

showed that the PM Nehru had erred in supporting China on the international arena and that the Chinese are very far away from considering their neighbours as "brothers". It also showed that the China has not been able to shed its imperialism and hence the idea of a Great China had once again prevailed in the Chinese foreign policy and consequently China looked upon the people of the neighbouring countries not as brothers but as "barbarians" to be conquered and ruled.

It is more than 25 years now that China has illegally controlled a large part of Indian territory since the 1962 war. Over the years, it has shown no inclination to settle this question amicably with India. However, as far as India is concerned a lot of attempts have been made to find a satisfactory solution of the border problem. In 1969, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister declared to the West Germany "Die Spiegel" that India leaves the door open for negotiations with China. Several rounds of discussion have taken place between the two countries over the border question and other issues of bilateral nature but no visible progress has been achieved so far in this regard. India seems to be quite sincere in its efforts to improve relations with China. It, however, wants a satisfactory solution to the border question as a whole and not in the form of piece-meal territorial concessions.

China continues to maintain huge military units on the Indo-China border. In addition, the sincerity of China in resolving the Indo-Chinese relations remains a suspect because it continues to supply arms to Pakistan. Not only did China support Pakistan in 1971 with men and material against India but its continuation of the policy of backing Pakistan against India obviously becomes an eyesore for India. The policy of China supporting Pakistan in 1970s still remains valid in the 1980s and the crux of this policy is to use Pakistan as a counterweight to India. It is this union between China and Pakistan which results in often anti-Indian utterances and policies both in China and Pakistan which escalate the existing embittered Indo-Chinese relations instead of solving them.

While India has amply demonstrated its sincerity in working for improved Indo-Chinese relations, it is China's turn to reciprocate not only in words but in deeds as well. It calls for restructuring Chinese foreign policy especially towards its neighbours, mainly India. China would have to exhibit that instead of propagating imperialism and colonialism, it would fight it with all might. In addition, it would have to sincerely sort out the thorny border problem between India and China instead of working for a piece-meal solution.



Frontline, May

Indo-Chinese Relations Trends and Prospects

Dr. S.N. Talwar

There is no denying the fact that India and China are the two giants in the Asian sub-continent notwithstanding their differing political systems and ideologies. Of late, there have been attempts at normalising relations between these two countries and these attempts have only partially succeeded. In fact, the actual normalisation of relations between India and China cannot take place until the border problem is solved, the Chinese occupied Indian territory liberated.

Chinese Imperialism in Indo-China:

It is rather strange that China who herself has been a victim of colonialism, and imperialism before its independence in 1949 should herself become its proponent and seek to dominate the countries around her, especially the countries of Indo-China. It is Chinese imperialism of the post-independence era which seeks to treat these countries either as part of China or its vassal states. The present Chinese leadership has tended to look upon Indo-China as its backyard and consequently the new Chinese leadership is irked when these countries of Indo-China seek to play an independent role in the region or express willingness to choose their friends. The Chinese leadership tend to look upon the countries of Indo-China as their "sphere of influence" and consequently interfere openly even in the domestic issues of these countries.

A typical example of Peking's imperialist ambitions in this part of the Asian continent are its efforts to subordinate Kampuchea and make it a part of its sphere of influence.

Also a particularly fierce attitude is displayed towards Vietnam against which Peking launched a punitive operation in 1979.

In its efforts to isolate Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea and to pit them, if possible, against the other countries of North-East Asia, Peking has recourse to whatever it can. China does not spare any effort to prevent contact between the countries of Indo-China and those of the A.S.E.A.N., to frustrate the efforts for a climate of trust, peace and mutually beneficial cooperation. To generate the A.S.E.A.N. countries' hostility towards the countries of Indo-China, Peking employs the known ploy of calling some as "small hegemonist" and thus trying to bring that Vietnam is

allegedly hatching hegemonistic plans and consequently is a threat to South-East Asia. This ploy is applied with particular diligence towards Thailand which is alleged to be threatened by Vietnam. At the same time China poses as the most selfless and a sincere friend and defender of the A.S.E.A.N. countries.

The "smile" tactics have not succeeded in dispelling the deep mistrust with which the majority of South-East Asia countries regard Peking's gestures. Not only have they not forgotten China's chauvinistic aspirations towards its neighbours, but they also know very well the Maoist ambitions for a great and powerful China dominating the whole world. These fears are further fuelled by the declarations of the Peking Government that China is the master of the Eastern Sea, of its oil-rich islands and sea resources. This is an unacceptable position both for the countries of Indo-China and for the other states of South-East Asia, particularly for Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Peking certainly finds difficulties in materialising its ambitions for a dominant role in South-East Asia and for pitting the A.S.E.A.N. countries against those of Indo-China, especially in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Peking's policy of splitting the countries of South-East Asia and inspiring hostility towards the countries of Indo-China has failed to win the approval of some other Asian states too. India, one of the biggest countries in the continent and enjoying considerable influence in the non-aligned movement, has also declared itself against Peking's expansionism in the region. The Republic of India was one of the first countries to recognise the government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea headed by Heng Samrin and is one of the countries which give an active support to the initiatives of the three countries of Indo-China for a dialogue between them and the countries of A.S.E.A.N. Thus, the Indian Government opposes Peking's attempts to split the countries of South-East Asia in order to subordinate them more easily to its hegemonistic plans. The realistic position taken by India, owing to her own sad experience with China in the late 1950s, is a stabilising factor in South-East Asia. The progressive forces in India are well aware that a strong friendship between the countries of Indo-China, South Asia, A.S.E.A.N. and India can succeed in raising a barrier before China's expansionism, — its ambition to become the most powerful imperialist

state in Asia.

China's attempt to militarize Pakistan :

It is now more than two decades that China and Pakistan have been linked by close ties of friendship. Peking renders not only political but also military support to Islamabad. There are strong geo-political considerations that motivate cooperation between the two countries. The care shown by Peking to Islamabad is undoubtedly dictated by the latter's strategic importance. The Chinese leadership expect that its

contact with Pakistan will help the country to enhance its influence in South-West Asia and strengthen its position in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The Chinese strategists have never lost the strategic importance of this region which serves as the borderline of two continents — Europe and Asia — and is linked with the major inter-continental land, air and sea routes.

The open courtship paid by the Peking propaganda centres to Islamabad should be seen as an indication of a plan to build a Pakistan-China axis. This also explains why both China and

Pakistan are keen to promote military cooperation and coordinate joint efforts in assisting the reactionary groups who conspire against Afghanistan. Zia Ul Haq himself has admitted that the past decade has seen Chinese military supplies to Islamabad worth more than two thousand million dollars. The first Sino-Pakistani military agreement was signed twenty years ago: 1966 saw the beginning of a lasting and stable cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries. The importance attached by Peking and Islamabad to this cooperation is evi-

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<p>CDC</p> <p>Computer Designed Chassis</p> <p>The revolutionary "X-58" chassis design with sophisticated LSICs for better power economy and longer life</p>	<p>IRC</p> <p>Infra-red Remote Control.</p> <p>Just sit back, relax, and enjoy its wireless multi-function finger-tip control</p>	<p>SCS</p> <p>Soft-touch Channel Selection</p> <p>Sophisticated systems to tune you on to any of the 12 pre-set programmes at the touch of a finger</p>
<p>SSB</p> <p>Super-SSI Blackstripe II Picture Tube.</p> <p>Designed for picture clarity, natural tones and 18% extra brightness</p>	<p>AVR</p> <p>Automatic Voltage Regulator</p> <p>Smoothens out voltage fluctuations within a wide range of 70-290V</p>	<p>PET</p> <p>Precision Electronic Tuning</p> <p>For instant station selection and drift-free reception the convenience of push-button electronic tuning.</p>
<p>FPC</p> <p>Imported Fully Plastic Moulded Cabinet.</p> <p>A sleek and elegant complement to your room decor.</p>	<p>HFG</p> <p>Hi-Tech Filter Glass</p> <p>Special glass attachment to cut down unwanted glare and give you full viewing pleasure.</p>	



CP207R
Colour TV

Texla® The right choice

25 years of commitment to the consumer